# SIGHT AND SOUND

*Tributes to Robert Flaherty*

*also*

THOROLD DICKINSON
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PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE
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The Film Quarter

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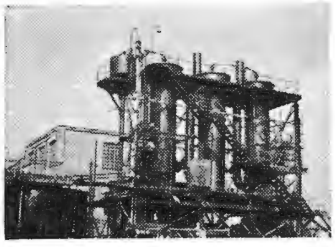

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# SIGHT AND SOUND

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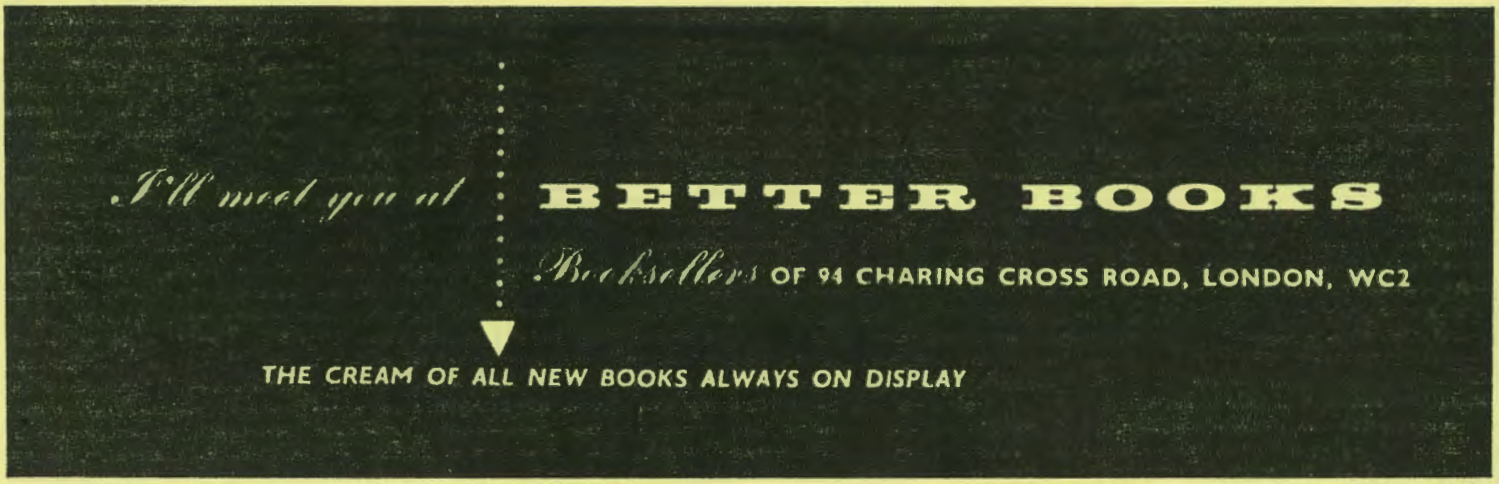

# CORRESPONDENCE

## *File on Cyril Endfield*

*The Editor*, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—James Morgan is in error when he states (in the current issue of SIGHT AND SOUND) that Cyril Endfield only directed one film prior to *The Sound of Fury*.

He has been a familiar name on "supporting" credits for some few years now, as associate producer as well as director and script-writer.

Admittedly, his work does not seem to have been of a very high standard (the Bowery Boys' *Pride of the Bowery*, and *Gentleman Joe Palooka*, based on the well-known strip-cartoon series), but one can recall with pleasure an amusing Pete Smith "Novelty" for M.G.M.

He first showed promise, however, by directing a film called *The Argyle Secrets* (released over here by Associated-British, I seem to remember) for much more than it was worth. The film, which starred William Gargan, attempted to be the poor man's *Maltese Falcon* but it made acceptable second-class fare.

Yours truly,
JOHN MANN.

194, Midanbury Lane, Southampton.

## *Meeting on the Rhine*

*The Editor*, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—May I correct an inaccuracy in the account of the International Film Conference at Bacharach given in your August-September number of SIGHT AND SOUND ?

The Conference has, since its inception three years ago, been organised for the German film clubs, by the French Cultural Relations Branch on behalf of the French ciné clubs. This is the first year that a delegate from the English film societies has been invited to attend, and it was a most welcome opportunity for our Federation of Film Societies to meet the German and renew acquantance with the French Federations.

As the English delegate privileged to attend, I should like to pay tribute to the admirable and invigorating atmosphere created by our French hosts, which made this Conference so notable.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET HANCOCK,
*Hon. Secretary,*
*Federation of Film Societies.*

35, Priory Road, Sheffield, 7.

## *Films in Melbourne*

*The Editor*, SIGHT AND SOUND

Sir,—I thought it might be of some interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers to hear how an Australian city fares with its film releases.

There are fourteen theatres in the main Metropolitan area of Melbourne, which show first-release pictures. The majority of these theatres are governed by the Hoyts organisation, which release 20th Century-Fox, R.K.O. Radio, Warner Brothers, United Artists and some English features, mainly those made by the above American companies in England. Hoyts control five of the fourteen, including the Regent, the largest and most popular of Melbourne's city picture houses. M.G.M. have two theatres which release their products exclusively. The Independent corporation (or Greater Union Theatres Limited) control two city theatres (one was burnt out a year or so ago) which show Columbia, Universal-International and some Ealing and Gainsborough pictures. One theatre—until recently devoted to the flesh and blood theatre—has now become the home of Paramount films, there are two more theatres which show exclusively British films, one theatre showing foreign language pictures, one more showing films which the management must bargain for in some way, since it shows films from all studios, its last two programmes being *All the King's Men* and, currently, *The Rocking Horse Winner*. Independent and Hoyts between them control the suburban circuit, which is very extensive.

On the face of it, Melbourne picture-goers are thoroughly catered for, but, like every other city, Melbourne has its snags. The luxury theatres show what I call the staple film fare, the colossal musicals, the Tyrone Power histories, the star-studded melodramas, the "Entertainments". Of course, you get a lot of enjoyment from these shows; but the few bolder works of Hollywood (I'll get to England in a minute) generally are relegated to a small Hoyts theatre considered by the majority of film-goers to show the "rubbishy films". This is, generally, true; but I have seen at this theatre *All That Money Can Buy*, the interesting series of thrillers produced by Val Lewton for R.K.O., *The Ox-Bow Incident*, *A Walk in the Sun* (released as a support to a third-rate western) and *The Set Up*. This theatre is, generally, a "change weekly" theatre, so one has to be on the lookout if one wishes to catch these shows, as quite often they disappear into oblivion after their brief city showing, never to appear again.

However, an interesting thing has happened here in the past month or so. The Melbourne Film Society showed to its members, at a private screening at the Melbourne University Theatre, Thorold Dickinson's *Queen of Spades*. The film created quite a stir amongst those present, and it was asked in the press when it would be available for general release. The answer, by the exhibitors, was "Never!". The picture was considered "too limited in its appeal".

This brought a spate of letters into the various dailies, and it was announced yesterday (16th of July) that the film would be released at the end of this week *as a support* to *The Spider and the Fly* at the Grosvenor, one of the exclusively English theatres. The film will probably be cut if considered at all too long for a supporting attraction, but this at least shows that exhibitors do occasionally heed the voice of the public.

Yours faithfully,
IVAN J. HUTCHINSON.

445 George Street, Fitzroy, N.6,
Melbourne, Victoria.

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## CORRESPONDENTS

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JAMES BROUGHTON and FARALLONE FILMS for *Mother's Day, Loony Tom, Four in the Afternoon*

# X-Appeal

The Front Page

WHEN MR. ARTHUR WATKINS, secretary of the British Board of Film Censors, deplored the squalid exploitation of the X certificate by certain exhibitors, he was condemning the kind of abuse that was bound to occur. In the pre-X days, the same thing had happened when some exceptionally dreary little American films about sex-education were shown, by special local licence, and "Adults Only" was used as a lure on the posters. Titillation is an ancient tradition of the lower reaches of show business, and it appears to fulfil a need.

Of the X films so far this year, not all in fact are sensational: a fifteen year-old French number about white slavery, *Traffic in Souls* (sic) was, inevitably, an early candidate, and *Passionelle* (with the bedroom scene, excised for an A, put back for an X) and *Manon* followed. But it seems unlikely the *La Ronde* or *La Vie Commence Demain* or *Occupe-toi d'Amelie* will satisfy those expecting shock value. The X certificate was created, as Mr. Watkins pointed out, to enable films of real merit to be seen intact, and also to prevent children from seeing films of harmful effect—from the latter point of view, the X of *Murder Inc.* and *The Sound of Fury*, and the unseen remake of *M*, are sensible enough.

Two points, however, arise. First, the X is *not*, in practice, guarantee of a film being shown intact—witness *Unwanted Women* and *L'Ingénue Libertine*. In the former's case, the cutting apparently occurred at the American distributors' end, but it seems odd that the latter, supplied directly from France, should not have arrived quite in one piece. The second point is that the puritans can still make themselves felt. The Cameo-Polytechnic cinema in London discontinued its policy of showing continental films because its governors disliked X films, and, the managing director pointed out, "in consequence, much of the profitable continental product is not available". One would have liked, perhaps, this explanation to have been a little more elegant, but it does not alter the issues. The Polytechnic governors could hardly have claimed that an X lowered the tone of the place because *La Vie Commence Demain* and *L'Ingénue Libertine* were shown there. It seems more probable that the inverted sensationalism of some newspapers—the technique being to combine a self-righteous attack on the X as a diploma of pornography with a lush description of the bedroom scenes in *L'Ingénue Libertine*—has been a distorting influence. This, indeed, is probably a more harmful practice than the lurid posters which, everyone knows, can be lurid enough for A films anyway.

Where both the Polytechnic governors and the journalists in search of an angle appear to be equally misled is on the implications of the X certificate as a whole. At present it applies mainly to continental films, seen in very few towns outside London, and American or British films with an X are almost certain not to get circuit bookings. The audiences involved are small, and likely to remain so. By turning up their noses at the X, its antagonists are in fact degrading it, assuming it to be an instrument of sensationalism rather than a valuable minority legislation in an industry that seldom caters for minorities. One can, after all, set against the abuses a number of important contemporary films that could never have been shown (unless disastrously mutilated) without the X certificate. Added to this, it is obviously very good that people under 16 should have been excluded from the high spots of cinematic sex and violence this year.

The X certificate is, in fact, turning out to be a positive and negative factor of real and clearly limited value; the abuse of it is only another manifestation of those outbreaks of squalor which good commercial showmanship itself deplores. The wider problem is unchanged by it. Children don't see *Murder Inc.*, as *The Times Educational Supplement* recently pointed out, but they still see *Samson and Delilah* (U), and there are plenty of A films that cannot, without causing much provocation, be categorised X—though they may contain alarming and disturbing elements. Apart from the clear-cut cases, children's filmgoing remains their parents' responsibility; apart from the official X's, there should be many unofficial ones. Meanwhile, we have reason to be grateful for the original gesture, which in many cases has justified its original intentions.

# IN THE PICTURE

"*Film Dollars as Before*", was *The Economist's* heading for its comment on the revised Anglo-American Film agreement, negotiated at the end of August. This sums up the situation. Some revisions were made for this fourth (and it was to have been final) year of the Agreement, but they were gestures rather than serious readjustments. The basic amount the Americans can remit from their earnings remains at $17,000,000 annually; but they can, however, also remit in dollars any additional earnings under the Eady Plan as producers and distributors of British quota films. The "bonus" arrangements have also been altered, so that American companies may now send home in dollars 33 instead of 23 per cent. of the amount they spend on film production in Britain. The clauses to encourage the distribution of British films in the Western Hemisphere remain unchanged.

With these revised terms, the annual dollar expenditure on American films is expected to be in the region of $24,000,000. Earnings in excess of this figure will continue to be invested according to the original scheme. The period of the Agreement has been extended to October 1953, with provision for further review if either party wishes it after one year. The American correspondent of the British *Kinematograph Weekly* suggests that the promise "*that Britain will review the situation at the end of the pact's two-year term is taken to mean that full convertibility is the British Government's desire. In other words, Britain hopes that all balances remaining on September 30th, 1953, will be unfrozen if the country's economy permits*". American industry leaders "*regard Britain's acceptance of the codicil as a gesture of warm goodwill*".

The American *Motion Picture Herald* remains, however, not completely satisfied. "*The new total is still not great in relation to total earnings of American films in Britain and meagre in relation to the remittances of the war years . . . It is to be hoped that as soon as conditions permit, all restrictions on the flow of film remittances from Britain will be dropped. As long as they remain in force they are a dangerous precedent and an invitation to imitation . . .*"

The extension of the production "bonus", and the existence of the distribution clauses, emphasises that an Agreement originally negotiated as a currency arrangement has become an instrument of government film policy. American production in Britain cannot be considered a dollar-saving device, but it does help to maintain some employment in British studios. "*The tiny concession in the dollar bonus for British production is not generally expected to induce American companies to make many more films here*", comments *The Economist*. "*They still tend to consider British production time-wasting and inefficient*". Unaltered is the fact that films produced by American companies in Britain are competitors of their own Hollywood product, and of the economic use of their own domestic studios.

✱

On a recent visit to this country, the distinguished director G. W. Pabst revived a suggestion he had made originally in the 30's about the international financing of films. It was discussed at the Congress of Film Clubs and Academies in Cambridge, and again at Venice last August. "*There are no longer*", remarked Mr. Pabst, "*any patrons—the tradition is dead*". Why, then, don't interested people—members of film societies—turn themselves into patrons? Mr. Pabst suggests that film societies all over Europe should collect a sum of money from their members—say, 5s. or 10s. each—which could enable a director of their choice to make a film of his choice, unfettered by the usual considerations. If the subject itself could be international, so much the better: two or three different directors might work on separate episodes occurring in different countries. The scheme, similar to one suggested recently by Mr. Thorold Dickinson, was enthusiastically endorsed by Mr. Paul Rotha, who mentioned Robert Neumann's *The Inquest* as an ideal subject of this nature. Developments are to be hoped for.

✱

The following excerpts from an article on the Cannes Film Festival, appearing in the official Soviet film review *Isskousstvo Kino* (*Cine-Art*), are worthy of record. The article is by N. Simeonov, the translation by Ina de la Haye.

"*Art in our country and in the countries of the Peoples' Democracies is explicit, clean, realistic, it raises man's dignity, brings out the best in him ; it inspires. Negative qualities of character are viewed with critical indulgence. . . Bourgeois art is one of decay and decadence ; it brings out the lowest instincts in man. The subject matter and conflicts in films from bourgeois countries shown at the Festival are based mainly on murder—committed for jealousy or other reasons—on fraud, theft, rape. Consequently, the characters are in the main neurasthenic, psychologically unbalanced, semi-sick. . .*

"*In 'The Next Voice You Hear', a film made under orders from the Vatican, we hear a voice speaking systematically over the radio. . .*

"'*All About Eve*', *with the famous American actress Bette Davis, is of some interest. A timid attempt is made to tell the truth about the hardships of film actors in Hollywood. . .*

"*The subject of 'The Browning Version' strikes one as strange. It is the story of a teacher who cannot even teach or bring up his own children. He is incapable of managing his family life, of establishing normal relations with his wife. . . An even weirder impression is created by 'Tales of Hoffmann' . . . The colour is not bad, though greatly inferior to ours. But the fantastic element inherent in Offenbach's opera has been made to assume absurd proportions, and turns into pure mysticism.*

"*A great many more films from capitalist countries shown at the Festival were filled with mysticism: murder: crime: vulgarity—and are characterised by formalistic methods and naturalism.*"

✱

"*After a few highly successful films, shown everywhere at the same time, the spectator becomes saturated with our faces*", wrote Francoise Rosay in her memoirs. "*For him, expressions become twitches . . . our playing banal, and soon he goes over to another specimen of cinematic fauna . . . Adieu succès, adieu travail, c'est fini, c'est la vie . . . c'est le cinéma!*" The actor who escapes this fate and continues to hold his public is rare enough, and the famous Louis Jouvet, who died in Paris aged 68 last August, was such a rarity. He had just completed a remake of *Knock*, which he first directed himself (in collaboration with Roger Goupillères) in 1934. Jouvet appeared in a lot of indifferent films, but his performances for Feyder in *La Kermesse Heroique*, for Renoir in *Les Bas Fonds*, for Carné in *Hôtel du Nord*, for Duvivier in *La Fin du Jour*, for Clouzot in *Quai des Orfèvres* and for Christian Jaque in *Un Revenant* are among the best in the French cinema. He was less successful as film acting became increasingly naturalistic, and his most substantial achievement remains, of course, as producer, impresario and actor in the theatre. He was a specialist in Giraudoux, and brought *Ondine* to the Edinburgh Festival in 1949.

An actor whose face had not become familiar enough died in Hollywood, aged 32, in September: Robert Walker had appeared in a few good films—one remembers him in Minnelli's charming *Under the Clock* in 1945—and it was only in *Strangers on a Train* that his talent really made its impact. This was a remarkable performance, of at times unnerving depravity. *Adieu succés, adieu travail . . .*

# LONDON

Autumn is, as usual, a season of increased activity in British studios. **David Lean's** *The Sound Barrier* is now in production at Shepperton; scripted by **Terence Rattigan,** it is described as "a modern adventure story". **Ralph Richardson** appears as an aircraft manufacturer who pioneers the building of faster than sound jet planes; **Ann Todd** is his daughter, who resents her father's ambitions and their cost in human life. Others in the cast are **Nigel Patrick** and **John Justin** as test pilots, **Denholm Elliott** and the Irish actor **Joseph Tomelty.**

At Pinewood **Ronald Neame** is making *The Card,* based on the **Arnold Bennett** novel, and starring **Alec Guinness, Glynis Johns** and **Valerie Hobson.** At the same studio **Anthony Asquith,** who has temporarily shelved his intended picture about Covent Garden, will film *The Importance of Being Earnest.* An impressive cast includes **Alistair Sim, Margaret Rutherford, Michael Redgrave, Joan Greenwood** and **Michael Denison.** This Wilde project was announced both by Asquith and by A.B.P.C., for whom **Mario Zampi** was going to direct; as both versions would have been in receipt of National Film Finance Corporation money, and both would presumably have been ready at about the same time, it is perhaps as well that one studio agreed to withdraw after discussions.

Other literary adaptations are the now completed *Encore,* a further omnibus selection from **Somerset Maugham** with episodes directed by **Pat Jackson** and **Harold French,** and *Pickwick Papers,* a **George Minter** production to follow *Scrooge.* Two Anglo-American films are also based on novels. **Robert Taylor, Elizabeth Taylor, Joan Fontaine** and **George Sanders** head the cast of M.G.M.'s mammoth *Ivanhoe,* directed by **Richard Thorpe** at Elstree. At Isleworth **John Huston** has recently finished shooting studio scenes for *The African Queen,* based on **C. S. Forester's** ironic study of the adventures of a woman missionary and a drunkard in Africa during the first world war. With a script by Huston, **John Collier** and **James Agee,** and a cast including **Katharine Hepburn, Humphrey Bogart** and **Robert Morley,** this is a most promising and intriguing venture.

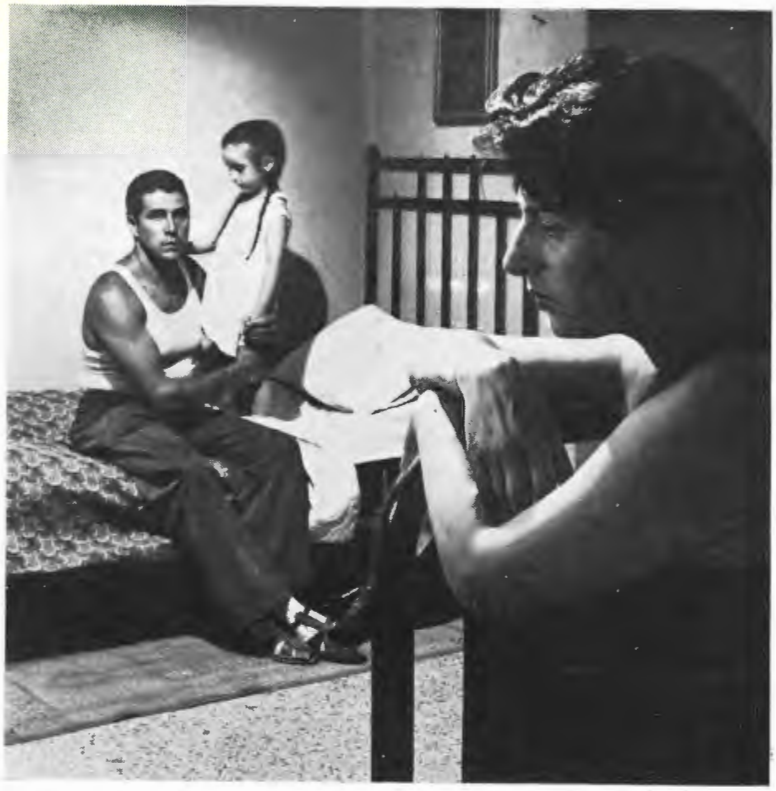
Another piece of Anglo-American exchange concerns Exclusive, who specialise in low-budget second features. This company has a tie-up with the phenomenal **Robert Lippert,** who turns out his own second features (mostly westerns) at an average speed of more than one a week. Robert Lippert is now expanding his activities—taking as long as three weeks to make *The Steel Helmet*—and in a visit to this country expressed approval of Exclusive's less rapid but still brisk shooting schedules. Exclusive are also going into production on a larger scale and, having made *Whispering Smith* with the American actor **Richard Carlson,** are now beginning shooting on *Dead on Course,* with **Zachary Scott.**

Ealing's next picture, following **Robert Hamer's** *His Excellency,* will be *One Sinner,* the story of a probation officer's efforts to check juvenile delinquency. **Cecil Parker** plays the probation officer, **Harry Fowler** the delinquent, and **Basil Dearden** directs. Other films in production include *Hunted,* a **Julian Wintle** production directed by **Charles Crichton** and featuring **Dirk Bogarde, Elizabeth Sellars** and **Kay Walsh,** and a **Raymond Stross** production, *The Tall Headlines.* Directed by **Terence Young,** with **Mai Zetterling, Michael Denison, Flora Robson** and **Dennis Price,** this is an adaptation of a novel by **Audrey Lindop** about the effect of a son's conviction for murder on the life of a suburban family.

The least happy of recent events is the announcement that Denham studios must close, perhaps for ever, when the current lease comes to an end this autumn. The studio, where **Walt Disney's** *Robin Hood* was recently completed, has been kept in action by Anglo-American production. The most successful to date of these films, Fox's *No Highway,* was made there. **Tom O'Brien** asked in the Commons if the studio could be requisitioned, if necessary, so that production could be carried on. Short of such a drastic step, it is difficult to see how Denham can be maintained unless another American company is prepared to rent it.

*Two scenes from the same sequence of "Cry the Beloved Country", an adaptation of Alan Paton's novel about South Africa, directed by Zoltan Korda, to be shown in London shortly. Canada Lee and Sidney Poitier.*

*Left: Pauline Stroud as the dumb Beauty Queen and Diana Dors as a knowledgeable competitor in Frank Launder's new comedy, "Lady Godiva Rides Again"*



*Above: Anna Magnani and Gastone Renzelli in a scene from Luchino Visconti's new film, "Bellissima", about a mother's efforts to make her daughter a child film star.*

## ROME

Following a late spring slowdown, due in part to the wait-and-see tactics of producers and film financiers seeking assurance from box-office returns on last year's productions, and also to the unseasonably moist weather which this spring curbed Italian film-makers' traditional preference for outdoor and location shooting, local film production has, with the coming of the summer months, swung into full activity. Most studios are working at near capacity, actors are busier than they have been in months—many are working in two films simultaneously—and early indications point to a year's production figure approaching if not surpassing last year's total of 110 feature films. Far more comforting, however, than this numerical assurance, is the fact that for the first time in many a month, almost if not all of Italy's best directors are either busy working on new films or closer to actual production than they have been in some time. And it is highly probable that, along with a traditionally large number of comedies and the again popular product known in trade circles as the "exploitation picture", the recklessly improvised Italian production set-up, so often fruitful in the past, will again this year produce its comforting if small share of worthy films.

*Below: Visconti directing Magnani for a scene. "Bellissima" is based on a story by Cesare Zavattini, de Sica's usual collaborator. The well-known director Alessandro Blasetti also appears as a film director.*

Among this summer's auspicious returns are those of **Visconti,** whose last film was *La Terra Trema*, made in 1948, and **De Santis,** inactive since his *Non C'e Pace Tra Gli Ulivi* was completed in 1949. Visconti, who in past years has alternated theatre direction with the preparation of several scripts which were later abandoned, is currently shooting *Bellissima*, story of a mother's illusions that her little girl has beauty and talent, and of her efforts to get the child an acting job in films. The girl finally gets a casting call—for the part of a stupid, homely child. **Anna Magnani** appears as the mother.

De Santis has temporarily shelved *Nostro Pane Quotidiano*, a peasant story with a social theme, with which he's been toying for years, to make *Roma, Ore* 11, which backgrounds the lives of several unemployed girls hurt or killed in the collapse of a stair-well while queueing for a job, and is based on a much-publicized recent happening in Rome.

**De Sica** will follow up *Umberto D.*, now almost completed, with a performance in, and technical supervision of, another Zavattini story, *Buongiorno Elefante*, which **Gianni Franciolini** (who recently made *Ultimo Incontro* with **Valli** and **J. P. Aumont**) is to direct.

*Due Soldi di Speranza*, **Castellani's** latest, filmed near Naples this summer with a non-pro cast, is finished and is said to follow the style of *E' Primavera*. Castellani will probably do *Fuori Sacco*, a provincial newspaper tale, next.

**Lattuada,** currently applying his savings towards the purchase of a movie camera which he hopes will give him independence, and still hoping, someday, to make his film on the problem of illiteracy, has shot *Anna*, with **Silvana Mangano.** Mangano plays a nun with a past who is tempted, by a chance meeting with her ex-fiancé, to abandon her new life for the old. For better or for worse, but perhaps indicatively, the film is being billed as "returning the great trio of *Bitter Rice:* **Mangano—Raf Vallone—Vittorio Gassmann**".

Inevitably, Italy will also have its multi-episode picture, to be called *Zibaldone* and directed by **Blasetti** with an all-star cast. Its twelve episodes will be taken from well-known Italian short stories and novels. If successful, others are sure to follow.

The ups and downs of the film world have, with characteristic uncertainty, affected the careers of other noteworthy Italian directors. With **Rossellini,** at this writing, still trying to find backing for his oft-postponed *Europa* 1951 (the title is said to have been quietly changed to a dateless *Europa*), **Camerini** and especially **Soldati** are avoiding such problems by continuing to satisfy their producers' desires for well-turned but pre-eminently commercial films. **De Robertis** and **Vergano,** who have in the past come up with some worthy bits of cinema, and have long been classed with the élite, continue, in recent productions, to belie their reputation. Their decline has once more fanned malicious talk concerning the true paternity of their name-making early films. Their demise, however, is being balanced in satisfying fashion by the rise to prominence of **Malaparte, Emmer,** and **Antonioni,** currently the most "promising" names on the Italian film roster.

Though Malaparte's *Cristo Proibito* has been unanimously and unfairly blasted by Italian critics, whose usual lack of moderation made them forget they were judging the film and not its author, its maker is to direct his adaptation of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* in the fall. Emmer, his *Paris est Toujours Paris* completed, is preparing the screenplay for a picture about the everyday life of three girls who live and work on Rome's famed Piazza di Spagna, to be called *Le Ragazze di Piazza di Spagna*. After his interesting debut with *Cronaca di un Amore*, Antonioni has rejected several scripts, and is now ready to shoot *La Donna Senza Camelie*. It is the story of a shopgirl (whose career closely parallels that of the film's star, **Lucia Bosé**), of her discovery by a director, her introduction to the bizarre (Italian) film milieu, her rise to fame, and her eventual maturing as an artist. Both the story and its film studio background are eminently suited to Antonioni's talent for biting, ironic observation and comment, particularly visible in some of his documentaries. Together with Visconti's *Bellissima, La Donna Senza Camelie* should furnish a highly interesting, uncompromising, behind-the-scenes look at the Italian film world.

ROBERT HAWKINS.

## HOLLYWOOD

**Cecil B. de Mille,** one of the film industry's biggest living institutions, celebrated his 70th birthday six weeks ago, and the occasion was of course marked by an appropriate luncheon. Guests included his family, his stars, and his studio executives: the *pièce de resistance* was a gift of five 24 × 32 in. scrolls made of British sheepskin, with a greeting designed in illuminated letters and a decoration scheme described as a "colourful circus motif". The sheepskins reached de Mille after a flying tour to the principal cities of the globe, where distinguished signatures were gathered for the birthday message. (Text: "*Greetings from Around the World to Cecil B. de Mille, the Greatest Showman on Earth, on his 70th Birthday . . .*".) Signatories from London included the Lord Mayor, the Bishop of London, the Chief Rabbi and the Dean of Westminster. De Mille, 37 years in the business, with 68 productions to his name, has just completed *The Greatest Show on Earth*, about the Barnum and Baily circus, with **Betty Hutton, James Stewart, Charlton Heston, Dorothy Lamour** and **Cornel Wilde.**

Meanwhile, some less mammoth productions are quietly under way. **William Wyler** is preparing a comedy, *Roman Holiday*, about a modern princess who, bored with her formal and enclosed existence, falls in love with an American newspaperman. **Fritz Lang** has completed *Chuck-a-Luck*, a *Destry*-type **Dietrich** vehicle, in which the star is partnered by **Arthur Kennedy** and **Mel Ferrer.** The unpredictable **King Vidor** is making a film about Japan, called *East is East:* and **Howard Hawks,** putting *The Thing* behind him, returns to a subject in the style of *Red River*, called *The Big Sky*, about a group of Kentucky riflemen making their way into Indian country by the upper Missouri. The leading player is **Kirk Douglas,** who will also appear in Hawks' next film, scripted by **William Faulkner** from a novel with the title *The Left Hand of God.* **George Stevens,** whose much-praised *A Place in the Sun* is still awaited, is making a Technicolor western, *Shane*, with **Jean Arthur, Van Heflin, Alan Ladd,** and **Joseph L. Mankiewicz** directs *Five Fingers*, based on the book "Operation Cicero", about a British spy in the Ankara Embassy who smuggled D-day plans to Berlin, with **James Mason** and **Danielle Darrieux.**

The plans of **Stanley Kramer** continue as interesting as ever: *Death of a Salesman*, with **Fredric March, Florence Eldridge** and **Kevin McCarthy,** directed by **Hugo Fregonese,** is now under way, and *The Four Poster*, story of a marriage from the wedding night to the partners' death, with two characters and one bedroom, starts shortly—director, **Irving Reis,** players, **Rex Harrison** and **Lilli Palmer.** Kramer is also producing *My Six Convicts*, with **John Beal** and **Millard Mitchell,** directed by **Laslo Benedek,** and has also signed **Fred Zinneman** and **Edward Dmytryk** for three films each.

Dmytryk, by the way, has completed a film for a small independent company since his release from prison, called *Mutiny:* a historical adventure set in the early 19th century, with **Angela Lansbury** and **Mark Stevens.**

Inspired presumably by the success of the Maugham pictures, **Darryl F. Zanuck** announces *O. Henry's Full House*, a compendium of four stories by the master, to be directed by **Kazan, Mankiewicz, Henry Hathaway** and **Henry King.**

## THE WHISTLE AT EATON FALLS

*The famous Dorothy Gish appears as a factory owner in Louis de Rochement's latest production, "The Whistle at Eaton Falls". The film tells of a crisis in the relations between capital and labour when a young worker is allowed to assume management of a decaying factory. Below, right, Lloyd Bridges is seen as the young worker: below, left, a crowd scene. The film was shot entirely on location in New Hampshire, and directed by Robert Siodmak.*

## STOCKHOLM

"Swedish cinema" has long been associated with two personalities: **Mauritz Stiller** and **Victor Sjostrom.** During and after the recent war new talents appeared in the Swedish studios: **Alf Sjoberg, Ingmar Bergman, Hasse Ekman, Arne Sucksdorff** and others. Sweden's Grand Prix winner at the Cannes festival this year, *Miss Julie*, was directed by Sjoberg.

Alf Sjoberg is one of the most talented younger directors: outside Sweden he is known best for *Frenzy* (1944), influenced, like most of his work, by German and Russian cinema of the 20's. His early films were flawed by false psychology, and also by the sacrifice of character and motivation to technical display: some of them are, in this way, reminiscent of von Sternberg. But his later films are centred on human beings and human problems; the art for art's sake elements have disappeared, and Sjoberg's acute, sometimes poetic sensibility emerges.

*Miss Julie* is based on **August Strindberg's** play: the scene is a Swedish manor-house during an oppressive midsummer night, which has its effect on Julie, the count's daughter. She begins a fatal love affair with Jean, her father's valet. After he has seduced her she learns that she means nothing to him, he has only been playing on her feelings, and she commits suicide. Sjoberg's emphasis in the film is on the childhood of Julie and Jean as the motivating factor of their characters and actions. The film changes constantly from the past to the present, and some of Sjoberg's effects aim at creating a new illusion of time and place. In one of the flash-backs he conveys three distinct points in time in the same camera pan. These panning shots are nearly all centred on the same point, which links the past and the present. Change of time and scene is independent of the usual fade-in and fade-out.

*Miss Julie*, incidentally, made in 1950, is the last film to have been produced in Sweden: taxation has brought all production to a standstill, though there are signs now that it will be resumed again soon.

FYNN SYVERSEN.

*"Miss Julie": past and present in the same shot. Foreground, Anita Bjork as Miss Julie: background, Julie as a child.*

## GERMANY

The end of the U.F.A. production company, which effectively ceased in 1934, when the Nazi propaganda ministerium bought all the shares from the Hugenberg concern, foreshadowed the economic anarchy of the post-war German film industry. Creatively, too, the German cinema is depleted. Many talented players, such as **Peter Lorre, Conrad Veidt, Marlene Dietrich, Fritz Kortner, Anton Walbrook,** and many directors, including **Fritz Lang, G. W. Pabst** (who returned, of course, in 1940, worked in Czechoslovakia, and is now in Austria), **Robert Siodmak, Erich Pommer, Billy Wilder,** had left during the 30's. In the Western zone the only production company of any size and efficiency that exists to-day is Real-Film, Hamburg: in the East, where the cinema receives state support, the D.E.F.A. company flourishes.

Real-Film has produced 18 films during the last four years; this may seem few, but the average annual output per company in the West is nearer one, and many of these are second features. The general insecurity has led to a large number of independent production and distribution firms coming briefly into existence, and in the last year no less than 130 independent producers registered themselves with the *Filmkammer* (Producers' Union). The main obstacle, as elsewhere, is production costs. Added to this, there has been a significant decrease in the number of picture theatres as a result of the war, and entertainments tax makes it necessary for the income of a film to be five times higher than its actual production costs, if it is to be financially successful.

Almost a thousand films were distributed in Western Germany last year, and only eighty were new German films. The 116 distribution companies exist mainly by importing and dubbing films from abroad, and reviving a few pre-war German productions. How long this economic chaos will last depends not only on the German Government, but on the level of production itself. If a company like Real-Film can continue to produce successful features (mainly light comedies, with such pre-war stars as **Anny Ondra, Willi Fritsch, Hans Albers**), and if the Bonn Government has the right to reduce the import quota on foreign films, the German industry will have a chance of stabilising itself. As for creative talent, that must be discussed later. It is worth noting, meanwhile, that one of the few really interesting German films since the war has just been made by a famous pre-war figure, **Peter Lorre,** who returned to write, direct and act in a strong melodrama with political implications, *Der Verlorene* (*The Lost One*).

GERD TREUHAFT.

*"Der Verlorene" is the story of a doctor (Peter Lorre) in Nazi Germany, engaged on a research project. His fiancée betrays him and his work to an unpleasant laboratory assistant; unhinged, the doctor murders her. But the totalitarian regime needs his work, and though he wishes to expiate his crime, he is not punished. His desperation leads to involvement with another woman (Lotte Rausch, seen in the still here), whom he also murders. After the fall of the regime, the past overtakes him. . . . Lorre directed the film, and scripted it in collaboration with Benno Vigny and Axel Eggebrecht*

# IN THE SCRIPT

**How much, or how little, of the virtues of a finished film as we see it, may be contained in its script, can sometimes be difficult to determine. The greatly applauded "touch" of a director may turn out to be the writer's inspiration, a particularly telling line of dialogue might be improvised on the floor. As a sidelight on this problem, and an illustration of the varying kinds of script with which a director goes on the floor, we are presenting extracts from the scripts of films recently made in Britain.**

**In this, the first series, the films are *The Man in the White Suit*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, *David* and *No Highway*. The first three of these were scripted (entirely or in collaboration) by their directors, but were made under very different conditions. *No Highway* illustrates the highly experienced, efficient "off the peg" script, written so that final adjustments and retailorings can be made to suit the style of the director who is to shoot it.**

**In the next issue of SIGHT AND SOUND we hope to publish extracts from the scripts of *Outcast of the Islands*, and *Queen of Spades*, to illuminate the working methods of Carol Reed and Thorold Dickinson, and others.**

**Grateful acknowledgments are due for the help of Alexander Mackendrick and Paul Dickson in preparing this feature; and to Ealing Studios and Twentieth Century-Fox, who kindly gave us permission to print the extracts.**

## THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT

**Shooting script by Alexander Mackendrick, Roger MacDougall, and John Dighton, from an unpublished play by Roger MacDougall, prepared for Ealing Studios Limited. This sequence is the arrival of Industry, led by the formidable old Sir John Kierlaw, at Birnley Mill, following on the news of the invention of the indestructible fabric. The sketches of set-ups were made by Mackendrick at the time of writing the script, and printed opposite each page.**

DISSOLVE TO:

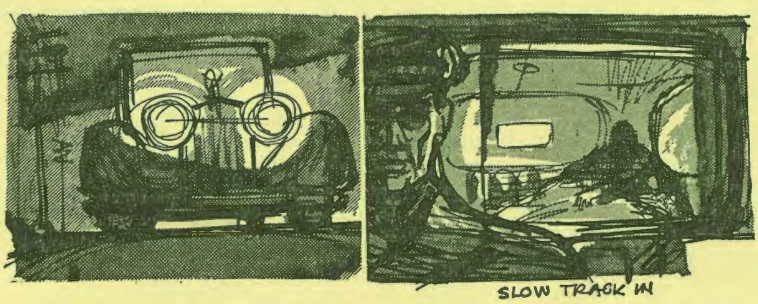
G.8. EXT. BY-PASS ROAD. EVENING (LOCATION) (2ND UNIT).

Two Rolls Royces are travelling smoothly and very fast, one behind the other. Against the night landscape travelling rapidly past, their headlamps glare. Music continues in sinister mood.

G.8*a* INT. CRANFORD'S ROLLS ROYCE. EVENING (B.P.) (2ND UNIT).

In foreground of the first car sits an impassive CHAUFFEUR. The spacious interior behind him is dimly lit by an overhead light. Two men sit, with brief-cases on their knees, leaning back against the upholstery. The larger is CRANFORD, an elegantly dressed, compactly built individual, sleek, smooth and quick-witted—Sir John's personal assistant, mouthpiece and high-class strong-arm man.

Beside him is MANNERING, a lesser edition of the same, who never speaks. CRANFORD, glancing swiftly at an expensive wrist-watch, throws a look over his shoulder to the window behind, through which we can see the headlamps of the Rolls Royce following.




G.8*b*. EXT. BY-PASS ROAD. EVENING (LOCATION) (2ND UNIT).

The second Rolls is even larger than the first. Music increasingly sinister.

G.9. INT. SIR JOHN'S ROLLS ROYCE. EVENING (B.P.) (2ND UNIT)

At the wheel sits another CHAUFFEUR, equally impassive. But there is no light on in the rear compartment. At first glance one might think it was quite empty, but as CAMERA MOVES IN past the CHAUFFEUR we distinguish a bundle of rugs and scarves wrapped about a figure who sits in complete shadow, silhouetted now and again against light from the window behind him. Music is *very* ominous.

G.10. EXT. BY-PASS ROAD. EVENING (LOCATION) (2ND UNIT).

CAMERA FRAMES in foreground a sign that says TO THE NORTH. The Rolls Royces entering from behind CAMERA go swiftly and smoothly past.

DISSOLVE:

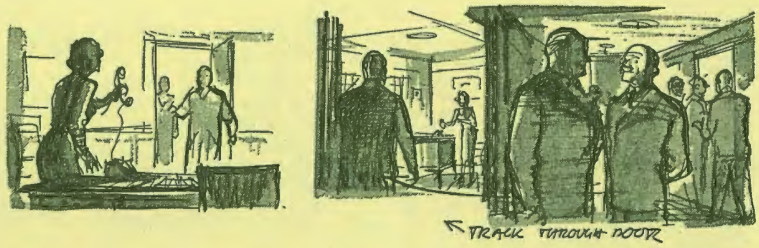
G.11. EXT. BIRNLEY MILL. LONG SHOT. DAY (LOCATION) (2ND UNIT).

Morning. A familiar view of the factory. The Rolls Royces, of which there is now a third, sweep in through the gateway.

G.12. OUT:

G.13. EXT. BIRNLEY MILL. EXECUTIVE ENTRANCE. DAY (LOCATION).

As the first Rolls Royce pulls up, CRANFORD steps out, followed by MANNERING. CRANFORD says a word to MANNERING, who nods and does not accompany CRANFORD as he moves forward to meet MICHAEL, stepping out of the second Rolls. CAMERA PANS further as they walk to meet the largest Rolls. While a CHAUFFEUR opens the door and begins to pull out armfuls of fur travelling rug, they wait.




G.14. INT. BIRNLEY MILL. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BIRNLEY'S OFFICE. DAY (STUDIO—OFFICE COMPOSITE).

BIRNLEY is standing in the open doorway of his inner office, speaking to DAVIDSON, who is in the corridor. Beyond DAVIDSON, a further open door on the other side of the corridor, leading into a Board Room in which REPORTERS and PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS are assembling. We can glimpse a side table, liberally furnished with glasses and drinks. BIRNLEY is in a triumphant mood. He is immaculate in black coat and stripe trousers and has even permitted himself a buttonhole.

BIRNLEY: . . . and as soon as I've finished with the Press, I shall want to see the heads of all departments . . .

A telephone rings in the inner office off screen. BIRNLEY

moves to answer it, CAMERA GOING with him as DAVIDSON also moves off, into the Board Room.

MISS JOHNSON is already answering the telephone at Birnley's desk.

MISS JOHNSON (to phone): Yes . . . (in a shocked voice) Who? One moment. (to Birnley) Sir John Kierlaw.

G.14*a*. REVERSE SHOT.

BIRNLEY looks suitably taken aback—then braces himself.

BIRNLEY (holding out his hand for the phone): All right I'll speak to him.

MISS JOHNSON (shaking her head, faintly): He's here.

G.15. BIRNLEY (STUDIO).

This really shakes him.

BIRNLEY (sharply): Here?

G.16. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BIRNLEY'S OFFICE. DAY (STUDIO—OFFICE COMPOSITE).

Starting on Sir John's feet in CLOSE SHOT. They shuffle away from CAMERA with painfully small steps. CAMERA, pulling back, reveals the backs of four figures advancing down the corridor. They all wear black. MICHAEL and CRANFORD are on the wings. The CHAUFFEUR supports the tottering figure in the centre. MICHAEL hurries ahead to the door to Birnley's inner office, but it is opened before he gets to it.

G.17. INT. BIRNLEY MILL. INNER OFFICE. DAY (STUDIO OFFICE COMPOSITE).

MISS JOHNSON, shrinking as from a blinding light, has opened the door. BIRNLEY walks in front of his desk. As MICHAEL appears in the doorway, BIRNLEY steps forward in surprise and angry realisation of MICHAEL'S hand in this.

BIRNLEY (bitterly): Michael . . .

He breaks off as MICHAEL turns away to leave the doorway free. CRANFORD, the CHAUFFEUR and the unseen invalid move through it.

G.18. INNER OFFICE (STUDIO).

BIRNLEY faces CAMERA in background as SIR JOHN moves to an armchair framed in foreground. SIR JOHN is wheezing terribly. For a moment the task of manoeuvring the old gentleman commands all attention. Gently he is lowered into the big chair. The process is hazardous because SIR JOHN is in danger of coming to pieces in their hands. A weakly, groping hand asks for something to be given to it. The CHAUFFEUR proffers a bottle of pills. CRANFORD, irritated, corrects him.

CRANFORD (in a swift undertone): No, no. The asthma atomizer.

The CHAUFFEUR offers a small object like a scentspray. The hand snatches it. Presently the wheezing abates. The CHAUFFEUR moves off towards the door and MICHAEL takes his place in shot.

G.19. SIR JOHN (STUDIO).

The CHAUFFEUR withdraws. This movement unmasks a close shot of the chair's occupant.

He passes the atomizer blindly to CRANFORD while the old eyes shift across the faces of the men before him. This is our first view of Sir John Kierlaw's face. It is a remarkable face, very lined and wizened with age. Physically there is not much left of the man. But from the bright, hard eyes gleams a sharp, vigorous intelligence. Also a sense of humour, a rather cruel sense of humour, for SIR JOHN has a contempt for his inferiors, and everybody in our story is his inferior.

He speaks without preamble.

SIR JOHN (wheezing): Now. Some fool has invented an indestructible cloth. Right?

# KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

**Final Draft Script by Robert Hamer and John Dighton, based on a novel by Roy Horniman. Prepared for Ealing Studios. Directed by Robert Hamer.**

**In her interview with Hamer published in this issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, Freda Bruce Lockhart mentions Hamer's "refusal to go on the floor with a shooting script. . . . As the players 'walk through' their parts he believes the cuts and camera angles proper to the scene become clear. . . ." This extract from his final script for *Kind Hearts and Coronets* contrasts sharply with the detailed preparation in Mackendrick's *Man in the White Suit*—not only in its sketchiness of camera directions and visual emphasis, but in its bare outlines of character and motivation detail (cf. the *No Highway* extract), which imply this film maker's very strong inner grasp of his subject.**

**This extract shows Louis Mazzini's murder of the charming photographer (Henry d'Ascoyne) and the famous funeral sequence that follows, when all the d'Ascoynes (all played by Alec Guinness) are assembled in the church.**

E.17*a*. EXT. LAWN. DAY. (LOCATION NO. K)

LOUIS and EDITH stroll towards a cedar tree, where the BUTLER has just set out tea. LOUIS places a chair for EDITH so that her back is towards the shrubbery, and himself sits facing her.

EDITH: Would you like Harwood to fetch you a headache powder?

LOUIS: Please! It is better already. I am sure a cup of fragrant tea in such delightful surroundings and company will see the end of it. I am afraid that Henry will think me a poor enthusiast.

EDITH: I sometimes think that he is too great a one. In a way, I am to blame for it. Before we were married he had few interests. He spent the greater part of each day at his club. I felt that such a life was unhealthy and persuaded him to live here in the country.

E.17*b*. C.S. LOUIS. DAY.

There is a distant "boomph" from the shrubbery, which does not escape LOUIS' ears, but EDITH does not notice it.

E.17*c*. C.S. EDITH. DAY.

EDITH (continuing): I hoped perhaps that he would interest himself in the welfare of our tenantry, as I do, but he became interested in photography on our honeymoon and since then it has become the major preoccupation of his life.

A column of black smoke is beginning to rise from the shrubbery.

E.17*d*. C.S. LOUIS. DAY.

LOUIS watches it, past EDITH, who has a troubled look on her face.

EDITH: Mr. Mazzini . . . .

LOUIS hastily returns his attention to EDITH.

LOUIS: Yes.

E.17*e*. C.S. EDITH. DAY.

EDITH: You will forgive my speaking to you on a personal matter, but it worries me that Henry should spend so much time on his hobby that he has little left for any more useful activity. Am I right to let him go on like this?

E.17*f*. C.S. LOUIS. DAY.

LOUIS, his eyes still on the smoke, appears to ponder EDITH'S question.

LOUIS' VOICE: I could hardly point out that Henry now had no time left for any kind of activity, so I continued to discuss his future.

E.17*g*. M.S. LOUIS, EDITH. DAY.

LOUIS: He has never shown any wish for a career in politics?

EDITH: None.

LOUIS: Nor any other ambitions?

EDITH: One only. To win a prize at the Salon of Photography in Brussels. He is so often . . .

She breaks off, listening.

LOUIS: What is it?

EDITH: I thought I heard something . . . .

She is about to look round towards the shrubbery, when

LOUIS speaks.

LOUIS: It's nothing. Just a bonfire down the garden.

EDITH'S alarm, instead of being alleviated, is increased.

EDITH: Bonfire . . . but it can't be, at this time of year. . .

She turns and sees the smoke. A cry escapes her and she springs up.

EDITH: Henry

She makes to rush towards the shrubbery, but LOUIS, too, has sprung to his feet, and he holds her back, with a hand on her arm.

LOUIS: No. Stay here.

He runs towards the shrubbery.

LOUIS' VOICE: Needless to say, I was too late . . .

E.18 and E.19 OUT:

E.20. EXT. VILLAGE CHURCHYARD. DAY (LOCATION NO. O).

Mourners are making their way into the Church.

LOUIS' VOICE: The funeral service was held in the village Church at Chalfont, prior to interment in the family vault.

E.21. EXT. CHURCHYARD GATE. DAY (LOCATION NO. O).

A closed carriage drives up. LOUIS descends from within and helps out EDITH, in widow's weeds.

LOUIS' VOICE: Mrs. D'Ascoyne, who had discerned in me a man of delicate sensibility and high purpose, asked me to accompany her on the cross-country journey.

E.22. INT. CHURCH. DAY (SET NO. 21).

It is full of monuments to D'Ascoynes already departed, including two busts of the First Duke and Duchess. The VERGER shows EDITH into the D'Ascoyne family pew.

LOUIS' VOICE: I did so, but not as far as the family pew, since I did not feel this a propitious moment to stress my blood relationship.

LOUIS takes a seat in one of the side pews, facing the nave.

LOUIS' VOICE: The occasion was interesting in that it provided me with my first view of the D'Ascoynes en masse. Interesting and somewhat depressing, for it emphasised how far I had yet to travel.

The CAMERA takes in the members of the family as he enumerates them.

LOUIS' VOICE: There was the Duke. There was my employer, Lord Ascoyne D'Ascoyne, there was General Lord Rufus D'Ascoyne, there was Admiral Lord Horatio D'Ascoyne, there was Lady Agatha D'Ascoyne, and in the pulpit talking interminable nonsense, the Reverend Lord Henry D'Ascoyne.

LOUIS yawns discreetly behind his hand.

LOUIS' VOICE: The D'Ascoynes certainly appeared to have accorded with the tradition of the landed gentry and sent the fool of the family into the church.

## DAVID

**Shooting script prepared by World Wide Pictures Limited, for the British Film Institute. The extract printed here is the sequence in which Ifor's father, the minister, goes to tell Dafydd, caretaker at the school, that his son has contracted T.B. Unlike the other films, *David* was made entirely on location, mainly with non-professional players.**

**Paul Dickson, who wrote and directed *David*, comments: "This shooting script was written by the director, and is fuller than he would normally have made it, because (a) a Committee had to approve it, and (b) considerable detail was necessary in order to assess the balance of the flashback, the introduction and the final scene. Balance was the chief problem in telling this life story—and the chief flaw in the film. The introduction of Dafydd as a caretaker, and Ifor, is too actively portrayed, without reference to its chief function as a minor-key setting for the flashback sequence". The sequence below is part of the introductory section.**

SEQUENCE 6

56. TRACK with Father past railings of school. — Music.

57.* L.S. Father goes. to house.

58.* M.C.S. knocks.

59.* M.S. Goes to window and around back.

60. Cut away to Ifor watching from path.

61. At school gates. PAN to entrance.

62. Reverse, as Father enters. He looks around and walks right. — *Voice of Dafydd:* Mary, dewch ar brws ma.

*Mary's voice* (his wife): Or gore . . . dyma fin dod.

Footsteps.

63. PAN with Father down corridor to main hall.

64. Cut away to Ifor entering and running up stairs.

65. Reverse as Ifor goes along up the corridor.

66. M.C.S. Father is met by Mary at door of hall. — *Father:* Mrs. Rhys!

*Mary:* O! Dyma'r gweinidog.

67. C.S. As they meet. She motions inside. — *Father:* Mrs. Rhys! Ble mae Dafydd?

*Dafydd:* Come in, Mr. Morgan, here we are.

68.† M.S. Reverse as they enter. — *Mary:* What's the matter. †It's Gwillym!

69. M.C.S. Dafydd gets up off his knees, wipes his hand on apron.

70. Cut away. Ifor at door of balcony.

71. C.S. Ifor. He opens door and looks down. — Sound of Mary crying out.

72. Low angle of Ifor from inside.

73.†[1] Reverse hi-angle. — *Father:* I'll take her to the house.

*Dafydd:* Thank you, Mr. Morgan. I'll be with you in a minute.

74. M.S. Dafydd kneels down and tips the bucket until the water flows. He starts to scrub the floor.

75.†[2] C.S. Footprints of the Father being scrubbed out.

76. Hi-angle, as 73, wide angle lens. TRACK BACK to Ifor's head in foreground. His shoulders begin to shake.

FADE OUT.

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* *Shots* 57, 58 *and* 59 *were omitted in the final editing. But shot* 56 *was extended. The Father walks along the street, past a boy selling newspapers, before reaching the railings, and we see Ifor following him.*

† *Shot* 68 *was omitted, and the dialogue line "It's Gwillym!"*

†[1] 73. *The first part of the action was held on Ifor, as in* 72. *Cut to* 73 *was made as the Father leads Mary away.*

†[2] *Shots* 74, 75 *and* 76 *were combined in one hi-angle view (as* 74) *of the whole action.*

SEQUENCE 7

FADE IN

77. C.S. School bell.
78. Boys in the corridor.
79. Two women cleaners try to keep the boys off the polished floor. Pantomime.
80. C.S.
81. The women throw up their hands in despair.

82. Along corridor as boys walk away from camera.

SLOW DISSOLVE through to C.S. same shot empty. Dafydd walks into bottom of frame and along the corridor carrying his bucket. He walks slowly, like an old man.

FADE OUT.

SEQUENCE 8

FADE IN.

83. TRACK with Ifor past window, in school corridor. He stops.
84. M.S. Outside Dafydd is cleaning the window.
85. Reverse as Ifor waves to him.
86. Reverse. Dafydd squeezes water on to the pane and blurrs his face.

DISSOLVE.

Natural sounds.

*Narrator:* When the next term began, old Mr. Rhys wasn't there. Some women did the cleaning work. They said he'd taken his son away to try and cure him. We missed him. The women were no good.

Then in the spring he came back—but alone. His son had died.

It changed him. He was a stranger.

## NO HIGHWAY

**Screenplay by R. C. Sherriff, Oscar Millard and Alec Coppel, based on the novel by Nevil Shute. Prepared for Twentieth Century-Fox. Directed by Henry Koster.**

**Efficient commercial production demands the ultimate in streamlining—hence the "screenplay", a term invented in Hollywood, where a director is often assigned to a subject only a week or two before it is due to go on the floor, and the script has been prepared quite independently. This script is a shooting script complete so far as structure and the actual progression of the narrative are concerned, but not broken down finally into shots. All action, movement and dialogue are included, but individual shots are at this stage determined by change of scene. A section of dialogue occurring all in one room—or, as in this case, one part of a plane—will be detailed in one shot. Change of scene (from the flight deck to the main cabin or the galley) determines a change of shot. The writers indicate the editing more closely only when an action sequence demands it, or when simultaneous impressions will clearly have to be conveyed by a series of quick cuts. The director assigned to the film can thus break down the script finally into sequences of close-up, medium shot, long shot, etc., according to his particular style.**

**This extract, of the Reindeer plane's night landing at Gander airport, shows both techniques: of unbroken dialogue scenes (No. 58) and of a more detailed action sequence. The character motivation throughout the script is very full: the changes in relationship between Mr. Honey (James Stewart), Monica Teasdale (Marlene Dietrich) and the stewardess Marjorie (Glynis Johns) as a result of his attempt to convince them during the night that the plane is in danger of crashing, are re-examined in the light of its safe landing.**

56. THE REINDEER.
Flying not far above the land.

DISSOLVE TO:

57. GANDER CONTROL TOWER.
One man on the radio.
CONTROL: Right, yes, I heard you, we'll be ready. Over—(to his companion) Asking for an emergency landing.
2ND CONTROL: What's up?
CONTROL: Said it was a long story, Better call A.O.A. Flight 26, tell them to circle. I'll handle things on the ground He reaches for phone.

DISSOLVE TO:

58. MAIN CABIN.
The STEWARDESSES are waking passengers who are still asleep, offering them coffee, giving cheerful advice about the landing. MARJORIE comes to the sleeping MONICA, beside Mr Honey.
MARJORIE: Miss Teasdale (Monica stirs) We land in twenty minutes, would you like some coffee?
MONICA: Oh. (she stirs) Twenty minutes. We're that close are we (looks around). And we're still all in one piece?
MARJORIE: Oh, yes. It's lovely out, it's going to be a beautiful morning.
MONICA: (looks out) So it is. (Takes coffee). Well, it ought to be, that was quite a night. (conscious of Mr. Honey, things seem very different now).
Well, I'd better get back and get some repairs made.
She gets up and exits abruptly. Marjorie is left with Mr. Honey. He stares at her solemnly. He is quite aware that the doom he has prophesied has not materialised, and that his position is therefore a little foolish. But Marjorie gives no sign of this.
MARJORIE: Would you like some coffee, Mr. Honey?
MR. HONEY: No, thank you.
MARJORIE: (smiles) You did have rather a lot last night, didn't you? (hesitates). I'm very sorry you had to be so worried, but I think we're quite all right now.
MR. HONEY: We're very lucky.
MARJORIE: You'll go back to your seat and fasten your safety belt for the landing, won't you?
And she goes.

59. FLIGHT DECK.
From Samuelson's angle, the airport at Gander comes into sight. SAMUELSON is tense; the ghosts of all the pilots who have cracked up within sight of the airport are riding with him. He can't help a look back at the tail.
SAMUELSON: Gear down.
ENGINEER: (obeying) Watch the under-cart switch, sir. The safety locks are out.
Samuelson nods.

60. CLOSE SHOT.
The great wheels start down.

61. GANDER FIELD.
Ambulance, then fire engines, come up the field and take their places, ready.

62. GANDER CONTROL.
Control officers peering, listening.
CONTROL: Sounds all right.

63. FLIGHT DECK.
SAMUELSON taut.
SAMUELSON: Flaps.

64. CLOSE SHOT.
The flaps come down.

65. CLOSE SHOT.
The tail.

66. MAIN CABIN.
All the passengers are casual except the three who know. MONICA is tense, watching out. MR. HONEY looks towards her, but she is turned away. MARJORIE looks out the window toward the ground.

67. FLIGHT DECK.
Beyond Samuelson, the landing strip is clearly seen, coming closer. CAMERA stays on this angle as it draws nearer and nearer, until the wheels hit the ground.

68. FIELD AT GANDER.
The big plane rolls down the runway.

69. GANDER CONTROL.
The control officer peering out.
CONTROL: Looks right enough, I don't know what he was in such a hurry about.

70. FLIGHT DECK.
SAMUELSON brings the plane to a full stop, He sits motionless a moment, in reaction.

(IN THE SCRIPT—*continued on page 95*)

# THE HEROIC FASHION

## Penelope Houston

*While he lay in state in a casket covered with a cloth of gold, tens of thousands of men, women and children packed the streets outside. Hundreds were trampled, had their feet hurt by police horses. In the muggy rain the cops lost control. Jammed masses stampeded under the clubs and the rearing hoofs of the horses. The funeral chapel was gutted, men and women fought over a flower, a piece of wallpaper, a piece of the broken plate-glass window . . . The fascisti sent a guard of honour and the anti-fascists drove them off. More rioting, cracked skulls, trampled feet. When the public was barred from the undertaking parlours hundreds of women groggy with headlines got in to view the poor body claiming to be ex-dancing partners, old playmates, relatives from the old country, film-stars; every few minutes a girl fainted in front of the bier . . . It was two days before the cops could clear the streets enough to let the flowerpieces from Hollywood be brought in and described in the evening papers . . .* (*John Dos Passos in* The Big Money).

THIS WAS THE SCENE at the death of Valentino. It is difficult to imagine that if some cataclysm were today to send all Hollywood sliding into the Pacific Ocean as much as a quarter of the emotion, genuine or spurious, would be expended on the victims. Indeed, seeing *Valentino*, the ridiculous and even pathetic tribute paid by Hollywood to one of its own legends, one might have been reminded of Norma Desmond's outcry, "It's the pictures that have grown smaller". It is not the pictures; but it is certainly their heroes, and through their heroes the stars. In the quarter century since Valentino died the figures of the 'twenties—world's sweethearts, great lovers and the rest—have become as mythical, as irrelevant, as fantastic as the fictitious Norma Desmond herself.

Stars such as Valentino, Fairbanks, Pickford, Swanson, Gish, even the great Chaplin and Keaton, achieved their stature because the audience, the films and the period combined to give it to them. Audiences have not grown up but they have acquired sophistication; films have lost the courage of their own frequently outrageous simplicity. The period of *Flaming Youth, The Sheik, The Mark of Zorro*, with its source of literary inspiration in the works of Ethel M. Dell and Elinor Glyn, was inevitably a short one. Its heroes spoke, if at all, in the flowery and ornate language of the captions, they wasted little time on the most elementary thought, their adventures touched reality at few points. But the bounding virtues of Fairbanks, the sleek, consciously enigmatic personality of Valentino, expressed the two primary qualities of the screen: action and movement. In the cinema, a convention of character grows up to accommodate the player who best conveys it, or a player arrives to embody in its clearest form an already existing type. The cinema's heroic age was a period in which simple but authentic personalities, exploited up to the hilt, suited precisely the conventions and the demands of their audiences.

The change in the heroic mould reflected a change in the public taste. The magnetic personality beaming or glowering his way through a series of highly coloured adventures would do only for an age which strove itself to achieve the grandiose, which possessed an optimism to which the simpler heroic virtues were not alien, and whose mass audiences had never before experienced the opulence and the rather tawdry splendour to which the screen introduced them. Since the 'twenties, the public has demanded a cinema whose relaxations into the older style resemble the attempt of a tired business man to join in the children's games. The hero is no longer dominating and active, but cowed under the pressures of his age; he is modified from Robin Hood or The Sheik to the melancholy figure of an expatriate, in a shabby raincoat, standing in the drizzle by a dockside waiting for the police to close in. He is, in fact, the hero as symbolised on two continents by Humphrey Bogart and by Jean Gabin.

The Gabin hero is perhaps the arch-type of the 'thirties. He is anti-romantic (yet so defiantly so as to suggest a romantic atmosphere of his own); anti-heroic, a victim-hero. His enemy is not an individual who can be fought, but the remote, inhuman and unshifting form of society itself. The Gabin of *Le Jour se Leve, Quai des Brumes, Au dela des Grilles* is cut off by his own actions; he tries to escape (into his happier past or, more positively, by actual flight), he is pulled back and punished, and he accepts his punishment with fatalistic expectancy. His ambitions have been abandoned before the picture even opens, and his only aim, as we see it, is to survive somehow, through human contacts, against the impersonal forces. Yet it is these contacts, arising more from pity than from love—with the girl in *Quai des Brumes*, the waitress in *Au Dela des Grilles*—that eventually trap and destroy him. The conclusion that isolation is impossible, and that society destroys, is one which reaches out beyond the context of the film. In the world of post-war Europe, with the tightening of economic and social pressures, the hero of *Bicycle Thieves* carried something of the same quality. He was anonymous, whereas Gabin has a massive, monolithic individuality; he looked to the crowd for safety, whereas the Gabin hero has tried it and been rejected by it.

The closest American equivalent to this isolated figure is perhaps the Bogart hero. The gangster of *The Petrified Forest* and *Dead End* has added violence to the character, but the restless, fatalistic loneliness is the same. On the right side of the law, the basic characteristics are retained. Raymond Chandler has written a defence of the detective as hero which shows just how romantically he can be conceived:

> . . . down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid. . . . He is a hero, he is everything. He must be a complete man and a common man and yet an unusual man. He must be, to use a rather weathered phrase, a man of honour, by instinct, by inevitability, without thought of it and certainly without saying it. He must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world. . . .[1]

Whether we think of Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe in this way or, as is more probable, not, the essence of this hero

[1] *The Simple Art of Murder*, by Raymond Chandler.

remains his isolation; the law rejects him; the enemy is fought for some compulsion which is never specifically financial. Films such as *The Maltese Falcon* or *The Big Sleep* show the sour, disillusioned figure of the private detective as the romantic hero turned inside out; he is almost always triumphant, but it is only a temporary victory against a world shoddy, corrupt, and hostile to his own unformulated ambitions.

The impassive, lonely hero conception can, of course, be carried to ridiculous lengths. An instance is the films of Robert Mitchum, such as his most recent, *His Kind of Woman*, in which the character remains from first to last in a daze of incomprehension, beaten up, half killed, surviving by luck alone. On the other side there is the romantic picture of the modern outlaw, the James Cagney hero whose death is the unconvincing payment for a glorious career of crime. Cagney is the most striking example the cinema has yet produced of the inverted villain-hero. This time, the isolated figure is in complete command; his personality is intensely strong; no one would dare to try to reform him, to suggest the benefits of a legal existence; society, once more the enemy, can exact its vengeance only in the form of a censor-proof ending. Kirk Douglas has something of the appeal of a new style Cagney; his world is different, but in a film such as *Ace in the Hole* his power to dominate it is the same, and his defeat as unconvincingly crushing.

Probably the strongest and the most easily assimilated literary influence on the cinema has been that of Hemingway. His hero, taken out of his context and cut off from the benefits of the Hemingway prose, has his preposterous elements. The defiant he-man virility, the monosyllabic speech, the reliance on instinct rather than reason, the terrible soft core of sentimentality, are his ingredients. The Hemingway hero has passed through many hands in the cinema, but seems to have settled into those of John Garfield who, being a very good actor, makes him almost credible. Once again, he exists in a self-created isolation. His aim in life is usually to reconcile his own personality with the world he inhabits, and in the cinema this is interpreted (*The Breaking Point, Under My Skin*) as being driven by his conscience to perform some noble and possibly fatal action which common sense and common logic reject. His inability to come to terms with his situation leads him into traps, realized as such only after the door has closed, from which the only escape is gun-battle or death. The same characteristics are seen in the boxing pictures, such as *Body and Soul* and *The Set Up*, in which the hero stands alone against the promoters, fight fixers and gamblers who represent the society of his world.

Another, and more curious, version of the hero in isolation is that presented occasionally by Gary Cooper and more recently taken over by James Stewart as his almost exclusive property. This is the good, simple, honest man who refuses to accept the artificial formulae on which the affairs of the world are conducted. *Mr. Deeds* is laughed at and brought to trial, *Mr. Smith* is nearly driven from the floor of the senate, the hero of *Meet John Doe* is brutally humiliated, the hero of *No Highway* is made the victim of his own convictions and so—this is unusual in a British picture—is the hero of *The Man in the White Suit*, who finds that what seems to him the greatest benefit available to society is regarded by its representatives as a danger to its whole structure. These heroes make their appeal, as it were, over the heads of the other characters in the film; they demand directly from the audience, as society, the faith that society as seen in the film refuses to give them. Their justification is not that we admire them but that we sympathise. Their victory—for they are usually victorious—represents, then, the audience's own victory over its everyday behaviour. It is a curious kind of comfort and it illustrates the individual's lack of trust in society: one of the most significant factors which the cinema of the last twenty years has exploited.

All these types of hero are in a sense victims. There are, of course, others. There is Chaplin's increasing bitterness against society; there are the heroes of sophisticated comedies—as diverse as *Nothing Sacred* and *Blithe Spirit*—who hardly emerge as individuals, victimised as they are by the women who call the tune (very few comedies of this type are built out of the reverse situation); there are the processions of maladjusted veterans, of criminals who want to go straight.

A variation on the position is occupied by the hero of the average American war film (and average is here very important, since the handful of important war films have taken up very different attitudes). The hero in *Sands of Iwo Jima, Battleground, The Frogmen* and the rest is a type adapted to the demands of a plot which goes something like this: the character at first cannot "get along"; if he is a private he resents the officers; if he is an officer he is distrusted by the men because he replaces someone they admired; his experiences follow a pattern of rejection by this new society; his rejection of them; and final "adjustment" thanks, as a rule, to some act of heroism on his part. In other words, the classic plot of the school story, with the single handed storming of a Jap gun emplacement taking the place of a century in the big match. This character provides a bridge between the victim-hero and the positive-hero, the transition being made by the mechanical means of the plot.

The English and Continental studios have rarely created a type of character in the same way as the American. They have, indeed, rejected the hero to an even greater extent, perhaps because the figure who stands out in any way is himself an outmoded conception. The curious sense of isolation which appears to have become the *malaise* of the over-complex, over-emphatic society of America has been felt less in Europe, where the ties of family and job are perhaps more fundamental, and where society is in itself traditionally the material for art.

There are, however, some British heroes who demand consideration even in these far from comprehensive notes. If there was a prototype it was the figure of the late Leslie Howard, around whom a legend of its own has grown up. His main attribute was that highly professional air of amateurishness which contrives to give the appearance of someone who has just dropped in for a look round and will soon back gracefully out of the film or the adventure. This casual quality is the main distinction of the English hero, whether inventing (*First of the Few*), or adventuring (*Pimpernel Smith*); with it goes an ability to merge into the background of the part. The sensible, professional behaviour of soldiers (*The Way Ahead*), sailors (*Western Approaches*), doctors (*White Corridors*), civilians in war-time (*Millions Like Us*), the police (*The Blue Lamp*) has created a sort of collective hero, distinguished neither positively nor negatively, but by the average ability to do the right thing at the right time.

There was, however, a curious reversion to the primitive during the late war and immediately post-war period. The cycle of *The Man in Grey, The Seventh Veil, The Wicked Lady* and their companions must clearly have met some need in society; perhaps the team spirit of the war films had become drab; perhaps this was merely a glorious retreat into unreality. In any case James Mason and Stewart Granger threw

a curious light on the development of the villain as hero. A film such as *The Seventh Veil* had as hero a figure who was recognisably the villainous squire of Victorian melodrama; brought up to date with a little psychology, he could serve his turn as a hero. But the pantomime atmosphere, the unconvincing love-hate relationships, the bullying heroes, had a short run, probably because the films, concocted too obviously out of papier-mache, lacked the self-belief which might have justified them.

The positive hero does, of course, survive, although in an attenuated form, like some prehistoric animal who has managed at some cost to adapt himself to the new age. He is confined as a type to a fairly narrow range of films. There is no place for him in modern society—perhaps there never was, for even in the 'twenties his appeal lay partly in the exotic world that had to be constructed around him. Cloak-and-sword performers such as Tyrone Power lack, of course, the personality of their prototypes; but even if they possessed it the film makers might not have the power to exploit it, while any actor who now attempted the antics of a Valentino would all too probably be laughed off the screen. Personality in this type of film has been sacrificed to the demands of the "spectacular" convention. Smothered in trappings of dubious period authenticity, the hero is no longer the centre of the film in his own right, and its *raison d'etre*, but a supernumerary who has to be carried along to provide a justification for the outsize sets and technicolor costumes.

There remains, however, the Western. The cowboy hero is taken seriously because his period is genuine and because his virtues—strength, honesty and determination—are regarded as distinctive of that pioneering period which America has transmuted into a sort of Golden Age of heroism. John Wayne, particularly in the films of John Ford from *Stagecoach* to *Rio Grande*, is perhaps the actor who best represents the type. The territory is sacrosanct, a last reserve, like that for wild animals, where the old style hero may continue to live in peace, undisturbed by the forces of the actual world. This figure apart, it is in Tarzan, Jungle Jim and Superman that the super-human qualities survive, reduced to the ingenuous level of the strip cartoon.

This article has not attempted a comprehensive survey; it would be necessary to explore more types, or to consider that very different figure, the genuinely individual hero. The type, indeed, is perhaps in itself a survival from the silent films, when characters had to be immediately identifiable, and to wear their marks of heroism or villainy as clearly as the stripes of a football jersey; it has been retained for its obvious convenience, but it need not be retained for ever.

It is possible, however, to arrive at some conclusions. The transition from the 'twenties hero to the 'fifties hero follows remarkably closely the curves of prosperity and depression, of security and uncertainty. The gangster hero arose during the slump; he still carried the marks of the villain, but as prosperity began to return he rose with it; his daring and enterprise began to appear as virtues in themselves. The Capra hero, the Cagney hero, belong to the same period: both, in their very different ways, reflected an optimistic if uneasy time. Then, rather earlier in France than in America, the increasing insecurity produced the new type represented by Bogart and by Gabin. The war shifted the emphasis, particularly in this country, from the individual to the group—and the individual still remains in Britain in eclipse. In America he has returned, but in a form which reflects even more than in the late 'thirties the increasing uneasiness of society. The prevailing sound from those cinemas where American films are shown seems to be a great cry for sympathy from the tough guys; unintelligent, victimized, battling along against all the odds that society has massed against them. In contrast to that depressing figure, the socially positive, perfectly integrated Soviet hero, the West has set an uncertain, unhappy man who probably represents the spirit of his times as well as may be.

There are signs, perhaps, of the emergence of a new type, a more positive figure who relies on intelligence and ideas as well as on physical strength; young actors such as Marlon Brando, Kirk Douglas and Montgomery Clift can convey this. But the fashion depends on the film maker and the audience as much as on the player, and of the three the audience is the most important. Audiences found in The Sheik the closest approximation to what they wanted from the cinema; they made the diverse heroes of the 'thirties, the battle-winning figure of the 'forties, the war-scarred and unconfident veteran of the early 'fifties. What they will make next is anybody's guess.

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# ★ *The Seventh Art* ★

Film dogs are getting more money now because the price of meat is going up. Hollywood dog extras start at ten dollars a day. A dog that works on a leash earns 15 dollars and one who knows what a cue is gets 25. Lassie, of course, is the Tyrone Power of the canine world. He earned 60,000 dollars last year. His son Pal, who appears in *People will Talk*. . . starts at 50 dollars a week. "This is Pal's first film", said Budd Weather, his "dramatic coach". "Pal has been Lassie's stunt man for the last two years. He was getting an inferiority complex... I'm glad to see Pal get a break like this". (*Publicity Handout*).

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*The Fallen Idol*—If there are any small town exhibitors who would like to have the whole theatre to themselves and not have any customers come in to annoy them, then just book this one. Dry as sawdust, and as usual with all English produced pictures, we couldn't understand 10 per cent. of the dialogue. . . . The scenes at the start about the young boy with a pet snake didn't go over very big with the women folks—I can tell you that. Why put so many snake scenes in a movie like this? For me it can be retitled "The Fallen Box Office", but I wish everyone else success. (Cinema manager in "*What the Picture did for me*" in the *Motion Picture Herald*.)

*

. . . success in Hollywood appears to be more closely allied to the realm of supernatural than it does for primitive man. The average producer seems less clear in his thinking about those elements in movie production which are knowable and those where chance plays a role than the Stone Age man is in his occupations. (From *Hollywood—the Dream Factory*, by Hortense Powdermaker.)

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*Montreal Kid Ban on Pan Again as "Alice" Bows Sans Moppets.* (*Variety* headline) Translation: Children under 16 are not allowed into cinemas in Montreal; the opening of *Alice in Wonderland* revived criticism of this law.

# Robert Flaherty

Pioneers in the arts usually explore their new world to its furthest limits. Those who come after only exploit what has already been discovered; sometimes they even corrupt. Robert Flaherty was a pioneer. He went all the way and saw everything. Let other picture-makers draw inspiration and power from his great works, to strengthen them in their own adventures. But, sweet Christ, don't let them try to imitate or advance what he did, for nobody else will ever do it half so well.

**JOHN HUSTON**

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## FLAHERTY AS INNOVATOR

### John Grierson

ROBERT FLAHERTY was a remarkable character, and it is all too easy to remember this and that of him and miss the bigger line which is the impact he made on cinema as a whole. Only rarely now do single films sweep across the world influencing the practice of film makers in general and extending the range of the medium, as did in their time *Birth of a Nation*, *Caligari*, *Potemkin*, *Sous Les Toits de Paris*, *Berlin* and *Vaudeville*. It is in that very elect gallery of eye-openers that one must set *Nanook*. Only Chaplin ever ranged so widely or was so universally accepted; and I believe to this day Nanook is a word for a strong man in Malayan and other languages East.

We have all written a great deal in our time about the special qualities of this film: how it saw the essential drama *in situ* and "from within": how it used the powers of the cinema to observe the special quality of natural movement and time established skills. But one has to remember the other travel films of that early period to know how unique *Nanook* was. Others, by the hundred, and from the earliest days, had appreciated the film's capacity for getting around to far places. Travel and animal films in fact played a larger relative part in film programmes than they do today. What Flaherty did was to introduce method and consideration into the fleeting camera glimpses of the early travelogue and give aesthetic pattern and significance to the record.

It has been mentioned often that there were two *Nanooks*; that the first went up in a blaze in Toronto—or was it Montreal?—and that poor Flaherty had, like Carlyle with his *French Revolution*, the dreadful task of going into the wilds to do it all over again. It meant historically and importantly that Flaherty was on the job, off and on, from around 1916 to 1921. Flaherty has told me about the blaze and his hands were scarred from it ever after. Yet, by an odd chance, I once saw a good part of the original lost *Nanook*, and if I never mentioned it to Flaherty it was because it was not in his thought or memory that anything survived. There was another reason, important for the present account. In the first version, Flaherty was still with the old travelogue of *Hales's Tours* and planning learning from the ground up, not to mention the backs and fronts of sledges. The second *Nanook* marked the point at which, after long labour, the flame had shot up and the light kindled and the art form had been added to observation. I say that, after all, there was only one *Nanook*.

Speaking for myself I saw *Nanook* on its first outing in this country, which must have been around 1922. The whole aspect of it was so fresh and curious that, though I had no reason at that time to concentrate on films, I must have seen it half a dozen times over. It was of course before the days of film societies, but in my time we had an F.S. equivalent in a little drinking group led by an Armenian girl from the Art School to whom I shall always be obliged. Looking back on it and in the light of events, I doubt if we let anything significant get away from us, but clearly we were not the only ones to realise the new horizon which *Nanook* had broken. Shoedsack and Cooper saw it too and both *Grass* and *Chang* were immediately derivative. So too was *Stark Love* by Carl Brown, a Paramount cameraman who, on the strength of Flaherty's success, actually prevailed on Hollywood to let him try the formula in the Kentucky mountains. The buzz in Hollywood indeed was sufficient to have affected James Cruze and the Western tradition, for something new and of considered observation appeared quickly in films like *The Covered Wagon* and *Pony Express*. By this time, however, Flaherty himself had been summoned by Paramount to make *Moana* under Jesse Lasky's wing. If only on technical levels, he was already setting a new pace.

*Moana* was the first of the all-panchromatic films and done in panchromatic against the advice of the Kodak experts themselves. They simply did not believe it could survive tropical shooting: far less in a laboratory run by natives, Flaherty-constructed on the spot. In this, as in so many things, the cinema's technical debt to Flaherty has never been sufficiently recognized. Cameramen, lab. men and all were bound by stupid conventions even in the late '20s; so much so that Hitch and I were revolutionaries when we insisted on so simple a thing as looking through the camera. One did not shoot when the light was "like a golden guinea" but Flaherty said hell, that's the very light you need for portraiture, with the sun low into the faces. One did not shoot except with direct sunlight, but Flaherty said hell, if you have a basic pattern in black and white the greys will look after themselves; and what he started Henri Storck followed up in Belgium and Jennings here. So too with long focus lenses: they became not *faute de mieux*, but positive instruments of a fresh kind of observation.

But I am running ahead. *Moana* subjected the Flaherty formula to fierce re-examination, for it was not, as it was handled, a commercial success. It played six months in Stockholm but, for the rest, did not suit the manners and

*"Man of Aran"*

*"Louisiana Story"*

*The water-lily: opening shot of "Louisiana Story"*

methods of American mass distribution and was thrown away for what it could get from audiences totally unconditioned for the event. Flaherty, the innovator as ever, but desperate too, begged Paramount to try it out in the six toughest cities in the States but with intensive promotion among specialised groups and interests. He was the first to think that one up. Paramount actually did it and had a marked success, but found it an all too strenuous and uncongenial departure from normal routine. So the method went into cold storage, to be taken up later by theatres like the Academy, Tatler and Cosmo here, and the Cameo, The Fifth Avenue, the Rialto and the World in New York.

It all meant a certain heartbreak for Flaherty, but one thing at least did emerge. The failure of *Moana* in these particular circumstances brought a few of us together and out of it came the first statement of principles—both aesthetic and economic—governing not only the documentary film but the specialised film as a whole. I think Cohen and I did most of it at the beginning in the *New York Sun;* but dozens of critics in America and Europe were on our heels and the burgeoning film society movement, based in London, confirmed us in the practicality of a new kind of promotion and distribution.

It all meant time, however; and Flaherty in the meanwhile was caught between Hollywood with its money and the more gracious world of film values which had yet to be created. His sense of frustration was not greatly mitigated when some of us, thinking it out a trifle more practically, maintained that this new world could not obviously carry large production monies and talked of thin ends of wedges and sums like two and three thousand pounds. It represented one aspect of a division of minds which produced, among other things, the British documentary film movement, large scale government sponsorship all over the world and the first intensive development—in Britain—of non-theatrical libraries and distribution systems. Yet I cannot think of any of these things happening as they did and when they did if Flaherty in the long sessions between 1925 and 1930 had not everlastingly posed the problem. It was, in fact, in the grim conclusions one had to come to after *Moana*, and not less after *White Shadows* and *Tabu*, that the new drive found its determination; and the Film Societies, the B.F.I., SIGHT AND SOUND and the C.O.I. might please ease their striped pants, put a finger in their stiff little collars and remember it now.

*White Shadows* and *Tabu* were both unhappy adventures for Flaherty, for the old character was always believing in fairies at the bottom of the garden. He believed that Hollywood would one day learn, and he craved its learning if only for the hope that he could settle down comfortably on location for a couple of years at a time and make films like the great gentleman-artist he was. Poor devil. When they ran *Moana* in Hollywood as a preliminary to making *White Shadows* it was seen in dead silence; and the story is that one pundit walked up and down in deep thought to announce finally he had "got a big idea from Mr. Flaherty's *Moana:* let's fill the screen with tits". The story—no doubt apocryphal—says that they proceeded thereafter to test Hollywood's beauties, dyed to Polynesian shades, to the waist; and that's how a star was born. To say the least, Flaherty did not feel very well in Hollywood and though his mother was a German, Murnau with his Teutonic artifice represented no happier a relationship. It was always poor comfort to Flaherty that *White Shadows* and *Tabu* were born of *Moana* and the simple proposition that Hollywood could put in the box-office that Flaherty had missed. The active pain of it meant that subconsciously he sought the secret of this mysterious b.o. for the rest of his life. Providence was kindest to him by concealing it, equally mysteriously, to the end.

Some other must say, with greater knowledge of who saw what and when, how the Flaherty films affected the continental cinema. I don't think they can have affected the Russian directors much, or Ruttman's *Berlin* or certainly Cavalcanti's *Rien que les Heures.* On the other hand Jean Epstein, and Joris Ivens—far more than one might suppose

from his political philosophy and endeavour—must have owed him a great deal: and so latterly with Ferno, Sucksdorff and others. Here in England the record is easier to follow. The earliest of the documentary theories was based plainly and explicitly on Flaherty's, though other forces of course appeared, derivative from the Russian and German examples, and not least from the circumstances governing British Social Democracy and the sponsorship which it developed. Sooner or later these strained our loyalty to the Flaherty formulæ, though never, of course, to Flaherty himself; and this was particularly so with Rotha and myself. But, on the other hand, the personal work of Basil Wright, John Taylor, Harry Watt, John Eldridge, Margaret Thompson, Brian Smith and all who came through the Realist Film Unit has an obstinate and decisive element of Flaherty in it. The obstinacy is to me important, because it derives from a first principle of cinema; and all the economic and social and political considerations which have come—properly enough—to affect our work cannot and should not hope quite to forget it. In another article on the character of Flaherty in the *Reporter* of New York I have written this of him:—

I personally regard him as one of the great five innovators in the history of film. I think that with him go Méliès, first of the movie magicians; D. W. Griffith, for developing the strictly movie terms in which a drama could be unfolded; Sennett, for transferring comedy from the limited space and conventional props of circus and vaudeville to the infinite variety of the world without: and Eisenstein for his study of organised mass and movement and his great sense of the film's potential in both physical and mental impact. Flaherty, great personal story teller as he was, did not considerably think of film as a way of telling a story, developing a drama, or creating an impact, either physical or mental. For him, the camera was veritably a wonder eye, to see with more remarkably than one ordinarily saw.

It never really occurred to him that a shot should be foreseen and, when we came later, because of the expense of the thing, to work out everything beforehand, as best we could, there was something in Flaherty that instinctively revolted. Some have said it was indolence, or disorder, or even a will to waste in him, but I will say it was nothing of the kind. For Flaherty, it wasn't what he saw or thought he saw that was important, but what the camera, over and above, revealed to him. Whence the infinite and infinitely patient experiments with movement; whence, incidentally, his pioneering work—not nearly sufficiently recognised—in the extension of the camera's technical capacities. No-one ever, or so significantly, studies his rushes so closely. Rushes were not the result for Flaherty, but the beginning: the moment of revelation. Expensive? Yes, it was. But the reason for it was as I have said, not otherwise. If paper had been as expensive as film, they would have said the same of Flaubert.

On one level, the camera was, for Flaherty, an extraordinarily convenient way of recording one's reminiscences; and reminiscences meant for him what they once meant for Boswell: the test of a man's penetration and of his capacity for life. It meant, moreover, an extensions of horizons for everyone, the backwall of the proscenium out and a window on the world. He loved to emphasise the mobility of the camera and he was to the end a man impatient and even angry with the great heavyweighted contraptions which not only needed a team of men to manhandle them, but put half a dozen other pairs of eyes between Flaherty and the object. Pioneer as he was of the Bell and Howell—I think he had B. & H. No. 2 on *Nanook*—it was with a hand camera, the Newman Sinclair, that all his work was associated. One result of his example has been to make the N.S. the documentary man's camera for a generation. With this light-weighted affair, one had the notion of a camera as a highly personal instrument, like a pen or a brush; and in nothing did Flaherty depart so considerably and perhaps importantly from the studio conception. Take this personal contact away, for whatever purpose and by whatever means, Flaherty was lost, as he was lost on *Elephant Boy*, *Tabu*, and *White Shadows*. "My God" he would say of *White Shadows*, "you should have seen them on their knees in the South Sea Islands, trying to tune in the Coconut Grove".

Behind the explorative and modest and near-mystical belief in the camera's power of sight, there was, of course, a basic pattern

*"Nanook"*

in his observation. His long early years in the Far North had given him a special affection for primitive peoples and an intimacy with nature and man in his relationship with nature which showed always in his clear blue eyes and, in the pinches of more complex argument, never left him. His first instinctive revolt against movies —and I think nearly all movies—was that the story was imposed on the background and did not come from within. He was shocked when Hollywood, following up *Nanook*, made a film on the Arctic with a phoney Eskimo girl and a love story that had nothing to do with the Eskimo's normal and very proper appreciation of polygamy. Flaherty was no theorist and tended, like so many, to fit the theories afterwards to the facts. He faked a bit like all of us and a little more so after they whipped him in Hollywood with the charge that he had no sense of box office, but he had a genuine passion for the genuine.

When he talked of the difference between a hunter throwing a spear and John Barrymore impaling a rubber shark with his profile, he had something which the camera, if no-one else, understood with him. When he discoursed, after of course reading my piece on the subject, on the " movement of craftsmen and priests that time had worn smooth", be sure it was not I that had done the shooting to deserve the theory but Bob himself who was the only begetter. He was, too, dramatically precise for his day when *Nanook* didn't make any fuss at all as he came out of the blizzard and found the shelter of his igloo or when everyone, more or less, had a pleasant Polynesian Sunday afternoon, flaying poor Moana in the big tattoo. He stayed where people were and if he did not impose greatly upon them, except to gentle everything he saw of of them, it was again, as with the camera, in the modesty that

*"Man of Aran"*

forever the Almighty was a considerable artist and that you had only to look on His works, under and under, and you couldn't miss. It is a point of view shared by Wordsworth in some of the best, as well as in some of the most naive, of his works. It is not exactly fashionable these days among European artists and metropolitans generally, but this is to be said for it. Flaherty returned us to the origins of all observation: where the seasons are; where flowers not only grow but are worn in the hair; where people take, or fight for, the fruits of the earth, and dine well and pour a ceremonial libation on the ground to the Gods and dance in thanksgiving; where the difference between a man and an animal of the wild is only one of degree; where storms come and go and are merely a great spectacle in the passing and children are forever the assurance that time is timeless and the horizon finally without too much pain.

I hope this may explain how, differing as we may, we connect all of us with the old man's basic contribution to the film.

# FLAHERTY AT ABBEVILLE

## Edward Sammis

NOTHING LIKE BOB FLAHERTY had ever happened to Abbeville. The Flaherty caravan, consisting of a station wagon, a camera truck and three or four nondescript vehicles, moved in one afternoon in a cloud of dust, and the sleepy little town, drowsing under its canopy of moss-hung cypresses, came suddenly to life. Bob and the Abbeville folk had an immediate affinity to each other. They were "cajuns" (a contraction of French Canadians) by lineage. They were imaginative, poetical, a race of storytellers who would describe to you the depredations of werewolves in as matter-of-fact a manner as city people might speak of the atom bomb.

The Flahertys moved in at once to a cool and cavernous old house on the edge of town. I don't think anyone ever counted the manifold rooms. Certainly no one ever counted the guests that inhabited them, a heterogeneous lot, drawn from all over the world by the warmth and compulsion of Bob's personality.

Over all the rooms stretched acres of attic. In one of the windows a huge fan, almost the size of an aeroplane propeller, hummed night and day, keeping the soft humid air in motion and the use of the house cool in consequence.

During the shooting of *Louisiana Story*, this mansion housed the Flaherty family, various members of the camera crew, actors, Cajuns, visiting artists, writers and photographers. Under the house, and in the yard and the trees lived other actors—the animal thespians. Among them were a family of baby possums that Bob, without success, kept trying to work into the story line, a rattlesnake whom nobody ever saw, and about three generations of racoons, which were enchanting as babies but immediately developed a viperish disposition upon reaching maturity.

It was Frances Flaherty's assignment to keep relative order in this erratic menage. How she ever achieved it was a miracle that no one quite understood. One night there would be no one at table for dinner, all having vanished into the vastness of the bayous. The next, there might be seventeen, appearing as suddenly and mysteriously as the guests had disappeared the night before. The patient negress upon whom the cooking devolved bore all this with infinite tolerance, padding about in silent slippers, muttering wonderment under her breath. Bob had won her heart with repeated donations to her church.

The talk at that long board table was of life in London and New York and Paris and Tahiti and Mysore; of films and stage and actors and life, and the dubious fate of man on this difficult planet. There was always the guest who had flown in from Shannon that morning on his way to Honolulu,

side by side with the trapper from the bayous and the oil driller just off his rig. Bob saw to it that each had his turn with a tale, which gave to the conversation an extraordinary richness and flavour.

Bob's day started about five in the morning, and with it the day of the whole caravanserai. The night before, right after dinner, he would have started sniffing out the weather, listening avidly to reports on the radio, going out to study the clouds. "It's going to be fine tomorrow", he would invariably pronounce. "Good day for shooting. Luck of the Irish".

A few hours' sleep seemed to suffice him when he was working. He would go through the house roaring at everybody to get to bed. Then he himself would sit up, reading, half the night. Again his voice was the first one heard in the morning, bellowing at everybody to rise and shine.

All the gear would be loaded into the station wagon, to be transferred to the cabin cruiser at the head of the bayou. The cabin cruiser was his pride and joy, and illustrated a curious side of his nature. Although he never compromised in his conflict with the urbanised world, always seeking out the simple and the primitive, he had a love of gadgets. He could rhapsodize for hours over a new camera, or a tape recorder. When he found the perfect coffee pot or electric burner, he would go out and buy them by the armload for all his friends.

But he never let these things possess him. He could do without them all at any time.

Every trip down the bayou was a new adventure, every coral snake on the bank, every trapper's shanty, an unending source of fascination. "Location" was a fabulous log shanty built on an island, on a peak of clam shells, and known as Trapper Jake's place. Bob rented it from Trapper Jake, who moved further down the bayou for the location. Watching the shooting in that cabin was a memorable experience. Bob and Frances between them did all the work that would take at least twenty people in Hollywood: checking clothes, position of props, script, angles, lighting—everything.

Bob never showed to better advantage than when he was directing dialogue. The silent film was his natural medium, but here he had to make actors overnight out of reticent, shy people, who had never seen a moving picture camera before. (And actors who spoke, at that.) The lights would go up. The actors would walk into their parts, as pleased and natural and relaxed as children, while Bob sat in the corner, never shouting, only speaking softly now and then, mostly in utter silence, perspiration rolling down his face.

The end of the day would find the actors exhilarated and Bob as limp as a rag. He had sweated it out for all of them.

Bob believed in his luck, and waited for it to strike. One day he was sitting under his vast umbrella on a platform in the middle of a bayou, in the wild life preserve which Colonel McIlkenny, of Tabasco sauce fame, had graciously loaned to him. Nothing was happening. The unit was killing time, waiting for the weather to clear. Suddenly Bob saw a baby racoon jump out of the pirogue (a kind of Cajun canoe hollowed out of a log), take the tie rope in his teeth and start swimming with it, towing the canoe behind him. Bob jumped to his feet. "Shoot it! Shoot it"! he shouted.

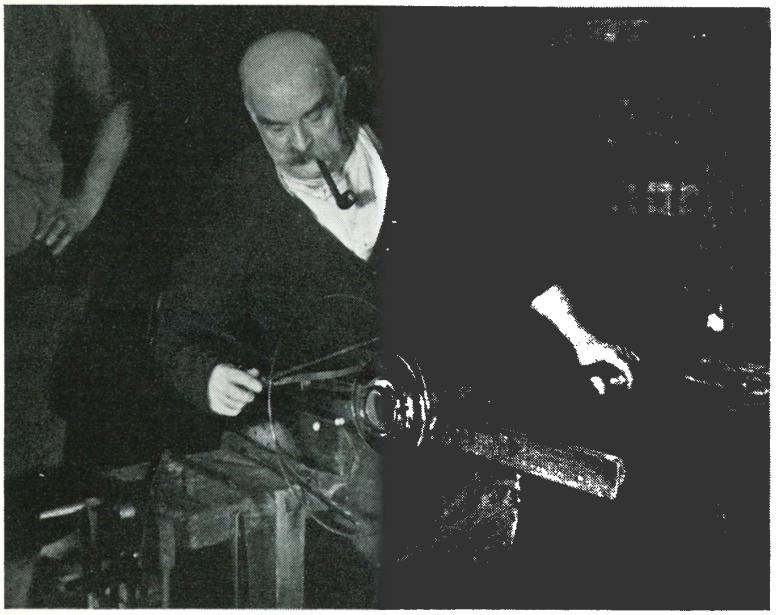
He fell in love with the racoon then and there, went back and rewrote the story line, making an important actor out of the racoon—which provided some of the most charming sequences of the film.

"Luck of the Irish", he would say afterwards, sitting at his favourite card table in the living room of the Abbeville house, a cigarette dangling from his grin, his great frame shaking with silent laughter.

An engaging and typical sidelight was the mesmeric effect Bob had on the local telephone exchange. He lived by the telephone. It was the instrument that kept him in touch with his cronies all over the world. You would come down first thing in the morning, and Bob would already be on the phone to London. You would hear him bellowing genially, as though to make his voice carry across the Atlantic. "How's the weather over there? You must come and see us. Fly over. We've got plenty of room".

It never bothered him that the house was bursting at the seams already.

*"Moana"*



*"Industrial Britain"*

He was only defeated once. One evening we heard him at the phone, saying in a matter-of-fact voice: "I want to talk to my daughter in Mysore. Yes, that's in India". The operator hadn't heard of Mysore and, when she located it, explained to Bob—although he never quite accepted it—that she couldn't get through.

Bob must have known the toll that *Louisiana Story* was taking, working as he did, day after day in the dank heat of the bayous. But, with his overwhelming confidence in his boundless physical energy, he never spared himself. The film remains for all to see, a fitting crown to a noble career; and, with it, memories of Abbeville, of a great dynamic personality in the full flower of performance.

# FLAHERTY IN REVIEW

## Nanook of the North and Moana

*Nanook* differed from previous and many later natural-material pictures in the simplicity of its statement of the primitive existence led by the eskimos, put on the screen with excellent photography (before the days of panchromatic emulsion) and with an imaginative understanding behind the use of the camera. It brought alive the fundamental issue of life in the sub-arctic—the struggle for food—with such imaginatively chosen shots and with such a sincere feeling for the community interests of these people, that it suggested far greater powers of observation than the plain description offered by other naturalistic photographers. Not merely did it reveal the daily struggle for life maintained by the eskimo people, but it demonstrated that the progress of civilisation depends upon Man's growing ability to make Nature serve a purpose, and by his own skill to bend natural resources to his own ends. The screen has probably no more simply treated, yet brilliantly instructive, sequence than that in which Nanook builds his igloo. . . .

Flaherty was despatched to the South Seas in the belief that he would bring back a symphony of female nudity, such being the main asset of the native to the film producer. Instead, Flaherty returned with a sensitively composed idyll of the Samoans, a theme that showed how the native, in order to prove his manhood, created a ceremonial ritual of pain—the Tattoo.

If anything *Moana* (1926) was more carefully observed than *Nanook*. There was the beginning of those caressing camera movements, which were to find rich fulfilment in his later work, and that feeling for the poetry of natural things which is inborn in the true artist. Photographically, it was a revelation of the infinite latitude of panchromatic emulsion and was claimed to be the first full-length picture to be made on this stock. More important, it demonstrated clearly Flaherty's personal methods of working:

". . . it became an absolute principle that the story must be taken from the location, and that it should be (what he considers) the essential story of the location. His drama, therefore, is a drama of days and nights, of the round of the year's seasons, of the fundamental fights which give his people sustenance, or build up the dignity of the tribe". (Grierson, *Cinema Quarterly*.)

PAUL ROTHA
(*Documentary Film*, Faber & Faber.)

## 24 Dollar Island

The director had already established a style of his own and a reputation in such pictures as *Nanook of the North* and *Moana*. In those films his major interest lay in documenting the lives and manners of primitive people. In 24 *Dollar Island* (1925) people were irrelevant. Flaherty conceived the film as "a camera poem, a sort of architectural lyric where people will be used only incidentally as part of the background".

Flaherty's camera . . .sought the Metropolitan spirit in silhouettes of buildings against the sky, deep narrow skyscraper canyons, sweeping spans of bridges, the flurry of pressing crowds, the reeling of subway lights. Flaherty also emphasised the semi-abstract pictorial value of the city: foreshortened viewpoints, patterns of mass and line, the contrast of sunlight and shadow. The result, as the director himself said, "was not a film of human beings, but of skyscrapers which they had erected, completely dwarfing humanity itself . . .". Despite the uniqueness of the film and Flaherty's reputation, 24 *Dollar Island* had a restricted and abortive release. Its handling at New York's largest theatre, the Roxy, foreshadowed somewhat the later vandalism to be practised by others upon Eisenstein's *Romance Sentimentale* and *Que Viva Mexico*. After cutting down 24 *Dollar Island* from two reels to one, the Roxy directors used the picture as a background projection for one of their lavish stage dance routines called *The Sidewalks of New York*.

LEWIS JACOBS
(*Experiment in the Film*, Grey Walls Press.)

## Industrial Britain

Between black soot and white steam he found an infinite range of grey shades with which to compose his pictures. He was soon using grey smoke, drifting mist and a glimmer of weak sun shining back from distant roofs, with as telling effect as if he had been perched up in a jungle palm-tree. Inside the factories, too, Flaherty found as much excitement in interpreting the skill of the English craftsman as he had found in recording the primitive human struggle of the Eskimo and the South Sea Islander. The way in which he would move his camera to anticipate rather than to follow the movements of a potter or a glass-blower came to be regarded by his documentary colleagues as text-book examples of how to use the camera as something better than a recording machine. . . . It was in camera movement that Flaherty was able to add so much to our over-static notions.

EDGAR ANSTEY
(*Experiment in the Film*, Grey Walls Press.)

## Man of Aran

*Man of Aran* comes closer than *Nanook of the North* or *Moana* to the life we know or our forebears knew, to our racial past. . . . The nameless man of Aran is separated from us only by the generations that brought towns and machines and easy living to our own kind. He even speaks a language that is not foreign to us—he is ourselves when we had to feed ourselves, by our own hands, from the earth and the sea.

Flaherty tells no complicated story of this man, he simply—but with great eloquence—lets his camera show the daily routine events of the man's life on one of the sea-stormed Isles of Aran; and those events are a profound and stirring drama. . . . The epitome of this struggle is caught and fixed again and again in pictures of the woman and boy against bleak land, vast threatening rocks or cloud-tossed sky, or of the man's boat continually lost to sight among heaving mountains of waves. . . .

It comes, probably, as near as one need wish for to pure cinema, a complete expression of its intention through the camera. Though sounds add immeasurably to its effectiveness—the sound of musical instruments weaving old Irish tunes into eloquent sub-commentary, and the different music of Irish voices, of gulls crying, of wind and roaring ocean—they really tell nothing that the camera does not show . . .".

JAMES SHELLEY HAMILTON
(*National Board of Review Magazine*.)

Photography by itself cannot make poetic cinema. By itself, it can only make arty cinema. *Man of Aran* was a glaring example of this. How affected and wearisome were those figures against the skyline, how meaningless that magnificent photography of storm after storm. *Man of Aran* did not even attempt to describe truthfully a way of life. The inhabitants had to be taught shark-hunting in order to supply Mr. Flaherty with a dramatic sequence.

GRAHAM GREENE
(*Footnotes to the Film.*)

Flaherty has not only concealed the existence of the class struggle on Aran. . . .

RALPH BOND
(*Cinema Quarterly.*)

## Elephant Boy

*Elephant Boy* begins magnificently. Toomai is set on the back of the highest elephant of all Mysore: in his youth and innocence giving a dignity to the Indian people one has never seen before on the screen. One is prepared for anything. The great herd of wild elephants is signalled. There are expectations of a jungle more exciting than the jungle of *Chang*, and of a relationship between man and nature as deep again as *Nanook*. With its synthetic spectacle of studio camp scenes and West End voices it brings the film at every turn to an artificial, different plane. It comes between the boy and the jungle, and the full perspective of reality is not realised. . . . The film drives on under the last of the synthesists to the mere circus excitements of an elephant hunt.

With *Elephant Boy*, realism along the Flaherty lines has struck a triple obstacle: in producer, salesman and exhibitor. . . .

JOHN GRIERSON
(*Footnotes to the Film.*)

## The Land

. . . Pare Lorentz, then at the head of the newly created U.S. Film Service, invited him to return from England to the United States to make a film on the misuse of farm land and the resultant widespread agricultural unemployment. Disaster attended this project from the start. Without clear directives, Flaherty was sent out to film what he saw. Wandering (for the first time) the farms and fields of his own country, he brought back an epic poem of the land and its people which ranks with his finest camera achievements. To this an official commentary and story-line was added, a mish-mash of the already sufficiently confused policies of the Department of Agriculture. It left *The Land* intellectually at sea, a state of affairs not helped by the fact that the United States was by now about to go to war. The problem was no longer agricultural unemployment but farm labour shortage. In view of this, Washington decided not to release the film, except non-theatrically, and it has never been shown to the large cinema public. But *The Land* will yet find its audience—not, let us hope, because of any cyclical recurrence of the economic situation it describes—but because, like every film of this master, it goes beneath the surface to the timeless essentials of the relation of Man to the Earth. Some of Flaherty's most felicitous moments are in this film, and some moments of horror which are new to his style, because he deals for the first time with the modern scene. His relentless camera, Helen Van Dongen's editing, make a machine cutting corn into a machine cutting lives. And we see those lives, cast off, broken down by the roadside, in the eyes which one starving woman turns into the camera. There is a dulled animal curiosity in those eyes, and some pain because she is squinting into the sun, but hardly anything human any more.

RICHARD GRIFFITH
(*The Film Till Now*, Vision Press.)

## Louisiana Story

. . . It is sheer delight; so—one might fancy, coming away—so, naturally, beautifully, inquisitively, the camera might choose to behave if it had a life of its own. It attaches itself here, like a dog or a companion, to a French-Canadian boy in a canoe threading the forest marshes of South Louisiana; the light drips down, the summer branches depend, in the dark waters there is a mysterious uprush of bubbles (mermaids?) or the familiar crocodile's shadow. To the boy, and to us, everything is an enchantment. He carries charms: a small bag of salt dangling at the waist and a bright toad next the skin. He will steal crocodile eggs, and even entice the monster itself with four pounds of flesh on a meat-hook at a rope's end. Everywhere with him he takes his pet racoon, as eager as himself. He will hunt. He will explore. He will navigate the river that rushes past these quiet waterways. When, instead of the roaring crocodile, a bulldozer crashes through the reeds, he is even more fascinated, and goes on to find a floating oil derrick anchored in midstream, with a tower a hundred feet high and a deep plunge into the river-bed. It plays the part in his childhood that a visiting circus does for a town-bred urchin. Every day his voyages take him to the foreign raft, to the men astonishingly expert and devout in their alacrity, or looking over the rail with easy smiles when the machinery can manage itself. *Louisiana Story* is simply the record of this infatuation, of the wild landscape, of a trapper's childhood, of the boy himself and his father and their cabin at the water's edge. Flaherty wonderfully surprises the sights and adventures of such a life, with its reveries caught into action. No other film I have seen quite equals its freshness of feeling—not even *Moana*, that idyll of Flaherty's own. You will perhaps find a similar feeling in some of Mr. David Garnett's books: he also has brought together the prose and poetry of simple lives, of nature and the grand machine.

So fittingly and unobtrusively made is the whole piece that one never thinks to pick and choose among the several skills displayed. The half-dozen or so people acting their own lives—is it they or their director who has brought to the screen such unselfconscious grace? The boy himself (Joseph Boudreaux) seems by his looks and actions to tell everything about a shy, sly, marvel-filled childhood. Then the depth and beauty of landscape—how much does that owe to camerawork, to the sound track, rich and chary of speech, and to the lovely score of Mr. Virgil Thompson? What part, in such sequences as the long struggle with the crocodile and the plunging of the oil shafts, has been played by that little-known hand, the editor's? The answer, I suppose, is that, under the inspiration of Flaherty, they work together as this master of his craft would wish. This seems to me, as it will probably seem to others, his best film.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT
(*New Statesman and Nation.*)

**Wendy Hiller**

Wendy Hiller, like Katharine Hepburn, owes a double allegiance—to the cinema and the theatre; the cinema, unfortunately, has been neglectful of claiming her. *An Outcast of the Islands*, in which she is seen here, marks her return after an absence of several years. Her last film was *I Know Where I'm Going*. Since that time she has appeared on the stage in London and New York—where she played *The Heiress*—and is currently in the star-ridden *Waters of the Moon*. Her new film, one may hope, is the beginning of a real return to the cinema.

# *TURNS*

**Katharine Hepburn**

The screen appearances of this talented actress are not as frequent as one might wish, nor do they always do her justice. *The African Queen*, which she has recently completed here under John Huston's direction, is therefore eagerly awaited. She appeared on Broadway last year as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and was an indefatigable theatre-goer in London during her stay. Back in Hollywood, she will make a new comedy with Spencer Tracy, *Pat and Mike*, specially written by Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon.

# INTERVIEW WITH HAMER

## Freda Bruce Lockhart

MOST EALING SUCCESSES depend on story-idea rather than on treatment, on a fortunate blend of spontaneity, social conscience and cheerful vitality, rather than on style. Robert Hamer's approach to film-making, however, departs from the general pattern.

All Hamer's work (excepting perhaps *It Always Rains on Sunday*, which was more in the general Ealing convention) from the ingenious "mirror" sequence in *Dead of Night* to the witty and cynical *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, is characterised by meticulous attention to details of atmosphere and setting, high polish and sophisticated taste.

Judged by his films alone Hamer might seem almost an aesthete among amateur sociologists; nothing could be more misleading or further from the reality of a square, fair, forty-year-old realist with his head screwed on, his feet on the ground, and a strictly professional approach to the cinema.

Hamer is one of the modern school of film-makers who chose films instead of, like the great pioneers, drifting into them as a last resort. Public school and University-educated for the Treasury, his first job after coming down from Cambridge was in fact as number-boy at the old Gaumont-British studios in 1934. A bracket to his characteristic half-mocking official studio biography says: "This was before some genius has thought of attaching the clapper to the number board".

From clapper-boy then to director he worked the accepted gamut. As a cutting-room assistant he joined London Films and had, again in his own words, "the inestimable good fortune to be put to work for Erich Pommer". And so to Ealing where to he came as editor in 1940, to work on *The Foreman Went to France* and *Ships With Wings*, became associate producer (*San Demetrio, London*) in 1944, and got his first chance to direct an episode of the omnibus thriller, *Dead of Night*, in the following year.

If Hamer's work stands apart from other Ealing productions, he says nothing to suggest a reason for this apartness, or even awareness of it. He speaks of the studio always as "we", rather as if it were a family co-operative than an employer. He speaks admiringly of Sir Michael Balcon's wisdom in giving the members of his team a free hand, subject to rational safeguards. He boasts with corporate pride that all the members of that team got their first assignments as directors at Ealing, a fact which perhaps tends to develop certain similarities of style.

Nevertheless, the fact remains—or so it seems to me—that since that very first mirror episode in *Dead of Night*, where Hamer was forced to enliven the confined action with every technical device at his still inexpert disposal, he has appeared more concerned with his medium than his matter; a perfectly justifiable thing for a young artist to be.

This is what makes Hamer's insistence on his pre-eminent and passionate interest in problems of character surprising. The impact of one character on another, the strange human patterns made up often of irrelevant characters; these, he declares, are the things he tries to put on the screen. Evidence of this pre-occupation is not easy to find in his films so far.

*Robert Hamer*

Hamer claims however that looking back over his completed films he only detects one consistent tendency: the acceptance of a preposterous story or situation and the attempt to treat the characters as realistically as possible within the given absurdity. This tendency culminated in the macabre comedy of *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, whose hero liquidates the seven or eight relatives standing between himself and the title to avenge the family's neglect of his mother. Incidentally, Robert Hamer had an illuminating experience here of the risks of tempering the truth of characterisation to the demands of public sentiment. I had objected to the early emphasis on the mother's grief and bereavement as tasteless in the context of the comedy. Hamer explained that it had been written so in order to try to create some sympathy for the hero and make him less doubly dyed a villain. Similarly the old Blimp of the last episode was intended to be hateful, again to create a hint of sympathy for Dennis Price by making the audience feel that the old horror was well served by being trapped as he would trap a rabbit. Audiences took the old buffer to their hearts, and thought his end too brutal even for this film.

If Hamer's past pictures have been remarkable for their attention to setting and atmosphere—as in *The Spider and the Fly*, where the old-fashioned detective story was transformed by a sense of period Paris most rare for a British film—he dismisses this as only a help to revealing character, since nothing is so indicative of character as surroundings.

For the future, Hamer dreams of making a psychological thriller. He quotes Zola's defence of *Thérèse Raquin*—"J'ai simplement essayé ce que fait un chirurgien sur deux cadavres"—as a fairly accurate summary of what he longs to do upon the screen.

We shall not see such merciless dissection immediately. For Hamer is still busy with the final stages of the diplomatic

drawing-room comedy, *His Excellency*. This was a task, one guesses, for which he had little heart; but one likely to mark two important phases in his development. First he hopes not to work again on an adaptation from a stage play. (His first full-length film, *Pink String and Sealing Wax*, was another; although he says he "enjoyed the melodrama but never felt happy with the domestic charm", the settings and plush pub atmosphere are what survive in the memory.) At the same time the difficulties themselves have brought him to the conclusion that rather than buy a stage success and discard the very virtues for which it has been bought, it is preferable to grasp the stage nettle and make the most of its theatrical nature.

Hamer's scorn for what he calls the pedantic objection to dialogue "because it didn't exist at the time of Caligari" is part of his very deliberately practical attitude to the cinema. With his training in economics, he has an unusual and valuable grasp of trade problems. He believes emphatically in the need to face the fact that the cinema is an industry as well as an art. He is therefore willing himself to accept concessions to popular taste if they will ensure the box office success of nine pictures in order to take a risk on the tenth

With his thorough groundwork, he has a balanced view of a director's responsibilities and his relations with the other members of the corporate body which creates a film. He is, so to say, a director's director. He does not believe in current theories of the production designer as captain of the team. The director cannot hope or be expected to enter into the technicalities either of camera work or of art direction; therefore he must hope and strive to find a cameraman and art director sufficiently in harmony with his mood, as well as skilled in their own crafts, to carry out his wishes.

Of the editor, Hamer has no fears, thanks not only to his own experience in the cutting-room, but also to his "reactionary" refusal to go on the floor with a shooting script. His scripts contain neither cutting nor camera instructions. He goes on the floor and begins by rehearsing a scene in full. In the course of rehearsal, as the players "walk through" their parts, he believes the cuts and camera angles proper to the scene become clear; while at the same time the method has the huge advantage of familiarity with the action when it comes to shooting out of continuity.

Hamer does not believe that any director should be his own producer. "A producer needs to stand back a little. If producer and director are the same person, who is there to stand back?" The proper thing for the director to do, Hamer suggests, is to go away for a time when he has finished shooting, leave the producer and editor to trim his work objectively, and then come back to fight for his pet sequences.

On the other hand, any director worthy of the name, Hamer agrees, will want to write his own screenplay; or at least to work so intimately with the writer that it becomes less trouble to write it himself.

It is probably fair to regard all Hamer's films till now—in spite of their accomplishment—as winning his directorial spurs; earning him the right to launch into original work. It is natural that he should want to direct an original story of his own. He has learned to use a vocabulary; now he must make up his mind what to say. His realistic caution restrains him from risking his time and other people's money on an idea all his own. I have the strong impression, however, that he will not be content until he has tried that logical fulfilment of a director's ambition, and that only then shall we have the measure of a talent which after only four pictures has achieved something more than promise.

*"His Excellency": Top, Robert Hamer with Cecil Parker and Susan Stephen. Centre and below, two angles on the same scene, with Eric Portman, Cecil Parker, Susan Stephen, Clive Morton and Alex Mango.*

# *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*

Robert Bresson's new film, adapted from the novel by Bernanos, is one of the most outstanding recent French productions, and one of the most uncompromisingly individual films made since the war. The doubts, loneliness, anxieties, struggles and everyday incidents in the life of a young country priest, "prisonnier de la sainte agonie", culminating in his death from cancer, are related in a spare, controlled, and deeply compassionate style. The young priest's own commentary, linking the scenes of his life, and the camera's recurring scrutiny of his character in some remarkably beautiful and expressive close-ups, make the film almost unique in its concentration on the interior life of its central figure.

Bresson chose an unknown Swiss actor, Claude Laydu, for the part of the priest; he saw him every Sunday for a year before shooting started, to instil into him his conception of the character. The film was shot in a small Artois village, setting of the original novel.

Now aged forty, Bresson was formerly a painter. Three films, *Les Anges du Péché* (1943), *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945) and *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, have established him as the most individual director of his generation. His films are not widely popular, which no doubt explains the smallness of his output. *Le Journal* was awarded two prizes in France this year, and an international prize at Venice.

of its effect through lack of preparation. The emphasis has been on every effect of Stratton's invention except the effect on Stratton himself, but it is to the latter that the story switches for its climax. Told this way, it seems more a device for evasion than the bitter, tragi-comic scene it really is. It resolves the other issues, but not the question of Stratton himself—who is left with a Chaplinesque fade-out. "Will he be successful another time? And, if so, what then?" as the synopsis puts it, making it only too clear that the film hasn't really answered the problems it raises, and hasn't made the situation complete in itself, either as a social satire or as the story of Stratton.

*The Man in the White Suit* does make it clear, however, that the implications of its subject are by no means comfortable. There is a sharpness in the humour that the slapstick scenes and the restrained handling do not obscure. The film has an interesting, individual flavour that even when it fails to satisfy reveals a distinct creative personality in its director, Alexander Mackendrick, who scripted it in collaboration with John Dighton and Roger MacDougall, the author of the original play. Its technique, though unobtrusive, is ambitious: Mackendrick concentrates on manipulating his characters within the frame, combining this with some fairly elaborate camera movement. The timing, the visual emphases, the choice of angles (Stratton apparently addressing his boss, but in fact saying what he failed to say in front of a mirror, the sequence of the arrival of the capitalists' cars, with the horrible old industrialist, Kierlaw, crouched in shadow) are resourceful and subtle. Most of the acting is lively and accomplished. Both Alec Guinness and Joan Greenwood, in parts that are occasionally baffling (the final scene between them seems uncertain as to the point it wants to make) are more than satisfactory, and there is a brilliant performance by Ernest Thesiger as the aged industrialist, sinister and hideously tenacious of life. In smaller parts, both Vida Hope and Henry Mollison are outstanding. Douglas Slocombe's photography is the best he has done for some time; the soundtrack is alert, not only in the engaging syncopation of Stratton's laboratory apparatus, but in general selection of detail. All in all, the film—which, when one considers it, was a difficult undertaking from many points of view—will stand out as one of the most individual experiments in Britain this year.

## DECISION BEFORE DAWN

*Reviewed by Paul Rotha*

LOCATION SHOOTING IN EUROPE seems to have become common for two reasons. First, it is a part of a fashionable attempt to break away from studio conventions. Second, some of it is probably inspired by the wish to employ blocked currency. I suspect both reasons lay behind 20th Century-Fox's assignment to Anatole Litvak to make *Decision Before Dawn* "wholly on location" in Germany, including, I believe, the Munich studios. Adapted by Peter Viertel from George Howe's novel *Call it Treason*, the story deals with the American army's use of captured Germans to return into their own country to carry out espionage for the Allies in the last stages of the war. The plot chiefly concerns a young German Luftwaffe corporal (Oscar Werner) who undertakes one of these missions along with an American lieutenant (Richard Basehart) and a Nazi ex-gaolbird (Hans Christian Blech). The corporal gets the required information and, after narrow brushes with the S.S. and an interlude with a harlot (Hildegarde Neff), joins his two comrades during an air-raid in Munich. He is finally captured and shot as a spy, but only after he has helped the American to escape. The ex-gaolbird makes a bid to stay on German soil but is shot by the lieutenant. There are some exciting chase and

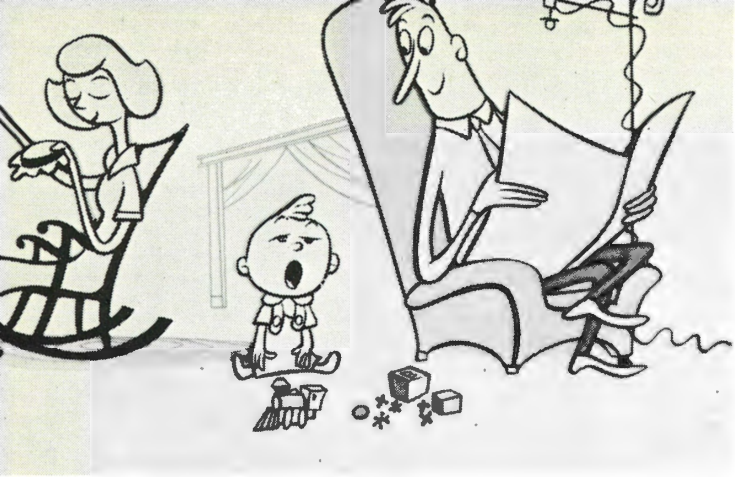
*Oskar Werner and Hans Christian Blech in "Decision Before Dawn"*

pursuit passages and some good acting from the German cast, notably from Hans Christian Blech, Helene Thimig and O. E. Hasse.

Many issues are raised by the film, but none of them is developed or treated with intelligence. Much talk about traitors, treason, patriotism, belief in freedom and democracy abounds, especially from Colonel Gary Merrill, but none of it adds up to more than superficial jargon. Genuine motives are unexplored. The film becomes utterly unreal when all the Germans talk in bastard American and the German army and civilians could well be American occupation forces in enemy clothing. The authenticity of the backgrounds—the commandeered monastery, the bomb-shattered ruins of Munich, Weisbaden and Mannheim, the Wehrmacht headquarters—only serves to make this language device more false and irritating. Only Lindtberg in *Four in a Jeep* has recently solved this national dialogue problem and not enough appreciation has been paid to him on that score. The basic weakness of *Target for Tonight*—a thing which shattered the reality of the film and for which I can never forgive Harry Watt—was the introduction of the Nazi A.A. gunners in shots that every audience knew must be faked because at that time they could not have been taken in Nazi-occupied Europe. Litvak might have solved his problem by using

*(DECISION BEFORE DAWN, and other film reviews, continued on page 81)*

*One of the pleasantest films to arrive in London this autumn is Jacques Becker's new comedy, "Edouard et Caroline", with Daniel Gélin and Anne Vernon (below). This light, expert and sympathetic comedy deals with a few hours of emotional upsets in the marriage of two young people, takes in some gentle satire at the expense of high society and is delightfully acted*



## GERALD McBOING-BOING

Shown at the Edinburgh Festival this year, and justly awarded an Oscar in America, *Gerald McBoing-Boing* (left) is one of the best examples of a new cartoon group, U.P.A. (now contracted to Columbia), which has brought a new freshness and freedom to a much abused medium. Gerald, who cannot speak at all but only utter a noise like " Boing-Boing!", suffers at home and school, but finally wins great fame as a sound-effects broadcaster, is a most endearing creation. The cartoon has bright and original colouring, a sophisticated draughtmanship reminiscent of some of the best *New Yorker* covers, a witty score by Gail Kubik, and a refreshing absence of clichés. Story, Dr. Seuss; producer, Stephen Bosustow; director, Robert Cannon; design supervisor, John Hubley. Other cartoons by this group now circulating include *Ragtime Bear* and *Trouble Indemnity*, both featuring a successfully eccentric character, Mr. Magoo.

# MINOR PLEASURES

*Three films worth looking out for during the autumn months: a new cartoon, a well-made and enjoyable second feature, and a South African comedy with local players, music and dance.*

## THE TALL TARGET

*The Tall Target* (right), released in Britain as a second feature, is one of M.G.M.'s enterprising low budget pictures in the style discussed earlier in SIGHT AND SOUND. Its story, based apparently on fact, concerns the efforts of a detective to defeat a plot to assassinate Lincoln after his election as president and before his inauguration. The story itself is a fairly conventional affair of suspicion, discovery, captures and escapes; the setting is a train journey. But the script (George Worthing Yates and Art Cohn) has a pleasing tension and economy, and conveys without unnecessary padding a sense of its period; Anthony Mann's direction is capable and uses the confined settings to advantage. The cast, led by Dick Powell (the detective) and Adolphe Menjou (the ring leader) includes Florence Bates and Ruby Dee, both excellent in small parts—all four can be seen in this still. Neither in pretensions nor result an important picture, *The Tall Target* is a neat and enjoyable minor one.

## THE MAGIC GARDEN

Shot entirely on location in South Africa, with a non-professional cast, *The Magic Garden* (left) is a simple, picaresque fairy tale about the chase to recover some stolen money, which changes hands many times before returned to its rightful owner—the local church—and each time benefits the people who find it. The setting is a shanty town on the outskirts of Johannesburg, and the story affords a glimpse of its varied inhabitants, introducing a poor family, a miserly trader, young people in love, a cobbler, a money-lender, the local priest, and so on. Directed by Donald Swanson (his first feature film) and vividly photographed by Cyril Pennington-Richards, *The Magic Garden* makes up for lack of style and polish by its affectionate observation and good humour, and by the natural vivacity of its local players. The song and dance interludes are particularly attractive. This enterprising film can be seen on floating release (British Lion) during the autumn.

(DECISION BEFORE DAWN, continued from page 79)

overprinted dialogue titles in the German sequences, or so devised his story that it was seen through American eyes as Carol Reed did in most of *The Third Man*. As it is, having crossed the lines by parachute, it becomes farcical to find S.S. sergeants and Wehrmacht commanders conversing in broken American.

It is only entertainment, the makers may say, and it does not really matter because the audience knows it's all make-believe. That is precisely why the stark actuality of the backgrounds, admirably photographed by Franz Planer (*Turn of the Tide* and *Letter from an Unknown Woman*) exposes the story and its handling as spurious. Location shooting reveals indecision of purpose in a split second. To get out of the studio is not in itself enough; it is only the first step in a difficult undertaking, indeed treacherous if you attempt compromise. *Decision Before Dawn* adds nothing to the solution of the German problem. It was not meant to, will retort the producers. Then why make it at all—and in Germany and at that obvious expense?

## PEOPLE WILL TALK

*Reviewed by Penelope Houston*

*All About Eve* established Joseph Mankiewicz, after a career as writer, producer, director, and now writer-director, in a position of his own. Choosing from the armoury of the cinema the most theatrical of its weapons—dialogue and the manipulation of actors—he uses them to occupy a sort of borderline territory between stage and screen. Far in advance of such practised adaptors from the stage as George Cukor, Mankiewicz still, one feels, uses cinematic means for ends not primarily cinematic. His new film, *People Will Talk*, is in technique a consolidation of the position taken up with *All About Eve;* the players are handled as adroitly, the long dialogue scenes are given a persuasive fluidity, the production (Darryl F. Zanuck) bears the bright gloss of technical expertise. The defects, as before, are an over-literary structure, excessive talk, excessive length, and a treatment of his subject which never measures up to its own pretensions; the subject itself is strange and perverse.

The purpose is simple enough: to defend unorthodox methods of medical treatment, to advocate faith and human understanding as ingredients as essential to modern medicine as the surgeon's or doctor's tools. The method of presentation suggests a contortionist trying to escape from a strait jacket rather than a film maker putting this none-too-complicated case. The hero, Dr. Praetorius, is a university lecturer who also runs a successful clinic; he is a wealthy man with an impeccable bedside manner. He has achieved success by beginning his career as a butcher, concealing his medical qualifications, and making enough money to found the clinic by posing as an unqualified miracle healer in a simple back-woods town. He is accompanied everywhere by a large, lumbering, silent man-servant, Shunderson, who, although the circumstances are admittedly extremely odd, is a convicted murderer. These facts are eventually revealed at a faculty inquiry instigated by a jealous professor; the way is prepared by numerous hints and conjectures, and in weirdness the story certainly lives up to the preparation. The major part of the film, however, is occupied with Praetorius' relations with a girl (Jeanne Crain) who comes to him for treatment. He tells her that she is pregnant, and she tries to kill herself; for her own good he then falsely tells her that he was wrong: she is not pregnant. Then he falls in love with her, marries her and, helped, one feels, by her docility rather than his own skill, surmounts the hurdle of telling her the truth. How he would have escaped from this contretemps except by marrying her is not, unfortunately, revealed.

Praetorius triumphs; the adversary is humbled, the faculty members are admiring, his wife is happy. His ends are good, therefore the excessively odd means must be justified. But to accept this assumption one must regard Praetorius as a genuinely inspired doctor, perhaps as something of a saint. Although Cary Grant's performance is able, conscientious and even likeable, the script only succeeds in conveying the impression of a rather irritatingly smug and didactic man, whose character is summed up in some fairly trite statements of belief tricked out in the smart Mankiewicz manner, and who gets on wonderfully with the patients. Apart from the potentially interesting past in the butcher's shop—on which no light is thrown beyond the bare statement—and some conventional talk about the importance of imagination and humanity in a doctor's work, his motives and methods are not explored, and what we see of his "unorthodoxy" would certainly not disqualify him from the most fashionable practice. The other characters are equally superficial and remote; the nice, rather negative girl; her cultured failure of a father (well played by Sidney Blackmer), and the mean little villain (Hume Cronyn) with whom one finds oneself perversely sympathising.

The story's strangeness may perhaps be explained by the fact—not made clear in the credits—that the film is closely adapted from a German film of a few years ago, *Dr. Praetorius*, written and directed by Curt Goetz. To this German original Mankiewicz has added his own top-dressing of dialogue whose cleverness and facility cannot conceal the unoriginality of its thought. The philosophy expressed is an affair of catch-phrases and non sequiturs; the conversations through which the story is developed are too often posed set pieces. Mankeiwicz' skill, however, lies in his ability to present an extraordinarily plausible surface. A typical feat is Shunderson's revelation of his past; fantastic in content, unlikely in context, it yet carries, momentarily, its conviction. The cleverness in detail is undoubted. But the elaborate, impressively varnished surface covers a structure essentially gimcrack.

## CYRANO DE BERGERAC

*Reviewed by Catherine de la Roche*

SO RICH AND MANY-SIDED is the character of Cyrano, that quite a number of differently accented portrayals of him can be right. For half a century the world's greatest actors have gloried in the role: Constant Coquelin, for whom Edmond Rostand created it, emphasised the comedy; from Victor Francen's dashing performance on the Paris stage I learnt for all time how the grace and sparkle, the absurdity and pathos, of this fabulous Gascon should look. Now Jose Ferrer, famous for his portrayal on the American stage and radio, appears in a screen version that touches the danger-line between reinterpretation and misinterpretation, almost reversing the author's conception.

For *Cyrano de Bergerac* is the masterpiece of an exuberant young dramatist—Rostand was 29 when he wrote it in 1897—whose work, a reaction against the intellectual, socially-critical themes fashionable at the time, was meant as "*un repos naif des pieces amères*". Full of adventure, elegance, wit and sentiment, it was inspired by poetic ideals, upholds the simplest, conventional and often superficial morals, and fastidiously eschews grim realities. Whatever its ethical significance may be, it is brilliant light entertainment.

Rostand, modelling his comedy on 17th century legends about a Cyrano who triumphed over his ugliness—he had a grotesque nose—by excelling as poet, wit and swordsman, created a romantic hero of infinite charm. Ferrer starts his performance with colossal vigour: the celebrated speech in which Cyrano proudly counters a young fool's taunt about his nose by publicly reciting a string of witticisms that *could*

be made about it, the duel he fights while improvising verses to coincide with every thrust, and his monologue to the cadets enumerating the various forms of bribery and patronage to which he says "No, thank you!"—all these are superbly done, establishing Cyrano immediately as a figure of authority. And in these early scenes, where he must demonstrate the superiority of his wit and nobility over the corruption of the court dandies, this is justified.

But Cyrano is also a great lover, passionately wooing the beautiful Roxane, not for himself but on behalf of the inarticulate beau she adores, writing his love letters and keeping the secret after the young man's death. Ferrer, maintaining the dominating attitude, never expresses the agony of unrequited love. The superlative balcony scene, where Cyrano, hidden in the shadows, whispers the burning words of his own love for Roxane's lover to repeat (and in which Francen's gallantly controlled anguish made me weep) is played more as if a long-suffering tutor were instructing a dense pupil.

The remaining episodes—Roxane's visit to the battlefield, Cyrano's feverish duel with his own death when, for the last time, he tilts at falsehood, compromise, prejudice and vanity—are unacceptably melodramatic, because you cannot substitute reason for sentiment in melodrama and make it carry conviction, Director Michael Gordon and his colleagues have treated the subject in the intellectual manner against which Rostand had rebelled, producing a film which has little appeal to the heart.

Cyrano does everything with style and panache, mocking danger, cultivating the charming gesture, never taking himself seriously; the film, however, presents his story with undue gravity. Again, if there is a sense of futility in Rostand's work, it is there as a faint undertone of sadness; in the film it is amplified to the conscious tones of our own times. Ferrer, though his performance is always spirited and virile, lacks both the romantic gaiety and the pathos.

The characters surrounding him are so slight that they must be acted with a firm style if they are to fulfil their purpose. Roxane is insipid and thoughtless, a *precieuse* in fashionable society who bids her lover "rhapsodize" about herself. Like all Rostand's heroines, she is subordinate and inferior to the men. There is little an actress can contribute to the part except refinement, and this Mala Powers' performance fails to suggest. Lloyd Corrigan, on the other hand, as the genial pastrycook, and Elena Verdugo as the charming orange girl, strike the right note.

The production is clearly based on careful thought and research, but it lacks elegance. The sets, designed in theatrical style, are not successful, especially as the direction has not the fluidity that made the artificial decor of a filmed play such as *Occupe-toi d' Amélie* so effective. The photography, though often beautiful, is kept uniformly sombre, which is inappropriate for a sparkling comedy that calls for brighter tones. In general, the film technique matches the emotional interpretation: up to the balcony scene it is admirable, and thereafter both run dry. Although having genuine qualities in their own right, both performance and production fail to catch the essence of the play.

## THE BRAVE BULLS
## *and*
## THE BULLFIGHTER AND THE LADY

*Reviewed by Richard Winnington*

HOW MANY FILMS have been able to assimilate the "colour" of Mexico? Perhaps two. The chiaroscuro is too rich, the pictorial character of the place is a snare. To romanticise with a guitar, to paint with the lens, to go primitive; Mexicans themselves cannot resist it. Nevertheless the signs are pointing to Mexico as a new area of creativeness in the cinema. The present Mexican Government is an enlightened one, and is likely to be re-elected. It can see the value of bringing in the disinherited Hollywood writers and directors. It can subsidise films as uncompromising as Bunuel's harsh and beautiful *Los Olvidados*. In the meantime Mexico's proximity, comparative cheapness and eyefuls of photogenic legend and landscape have emboldened both Columbia and Republic simultaneously to satisfy the current location-fever and tackle the forbidden subject of bullfighting. Any film made for Anglo-American audiences on this theme is crippled by the ban imposed on actual scenes of bullfighting. Both films suffer in this respect though both, in their ways, testify to commendable intentions. They make at least pretensions of disclosing the mystique of bullfighting.

Robert Rossen's production for Columbia of Tom Lea's *The Brave Bulls* is the more ambitious and the less successful film. Repeating and exaggerating all the faults of *All the King's Men* it is completely overcome by local colour. A primary weakness of script (by John Bright) which (I take it) tries to reproduce the book chunk by chunk, is turned into nothing less than chaos by Rossen's surrender to tempting local detail.

The central figure, Mexico's most adored torero, Luis Bello (Mel Ferrer) is timid, disillusioned, fearful that his fighting courage has given out, when he falls under the spell of a fickle socialite (Miroslava). The liaison does not increase his confidence and when she betrays him with his friend and manager (Anthony Quinn) the matador hits bottom. A hint, however, that the manager's betrayal springs from the highest motives is not pursued, and he and his paramour are perfunctorily killed off. At the same time Bello's young brother is waiting for his first chance in the bullring and Bello is being importuned by the shabby little owner of the arena where he killed his first bull, to pay a gala visit there as leading matador.

The link between these separate themes is Bello and it is never joined because Bello is not allowed to develop as a character. His conflict is within himself and the narrative should move implacably to the real tragedy and real climax of man-versus-bull. This theme also is lost on the way in a series of snapshots, vivid at times, and informative, but entirely on the surface. The camera work of Floyd Crosby and James Wong Howe is excellent and the soundtrack, over which the traditional overture of the bullring is used as a leit-motif, is tremendously effective.

*The Bullfighter and the Lady*, produced by John Wayne and directed by Budd Boetticher, puts more effective emphasis on the dedicated isolation of the matador through a simpler and firmer narrative. A young American variety star (Robert Stack) sees the great torero Estrada (Gilbert Roland) in the ring and is seized with a fever to fight bulls. He becomes a pupil and friend of the matador and through this device a certain amount of simplified information about bullfighting is imparted—though not nearly as much as can be gained by looking at Goya's etchings. Through Roland's magnificent playing something can be sensed of the intense and purified approach of the matador to the bull, his equal partner in the art that reaches perfection in death.

Robert Stack is an agreeable ash blond actor who, with Joy Page, balances the film for the box-office with a love interest and somewhat blurs the point of the film by becoming a leading matador in six short lessons.

The censor, who will allow far crueller treatment of animals than bullfighting to be glorified on the screen, has, one suspects, stepped hard on this film. The mutilated newsreel shots of the ring—though edited by John Ford—are quite useless since they all avoid the "moment of truth". Nor in either of these films is there any explanation of why, when or how the bull is killed.

# SOME NOTES ON ACTING

## Mai Zetterling

AM I REALLY the person to write an article about film and stage acting? It is true that I have had experience in both for nearly ten years, but I consider myself still only a beginner and I feel (without trying in the least to impress with how modest I am) that after these ten years I have achieved nothing of what I really want, especially in the cinema.

I have found that even quite intelligent people (usually, of course, people who do not know anything about the theatre or the cinema) always ask: "Isn't it difficult to learn all those lines?" They don't understand when I answer: "That's the *least* difficult thing about acting". It is all the other things that matter so much more. But to explain one's whole system of acting would take too much space, so I shall only give a brief outline of how I have worked, and am still working.

Perhaps I should say what literature I have read, and what books have helped me. The most important books for anybody studying our business, whether as director, actor or producer, and whether one agrees with everything in them or not, are Constantin Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares* and *My Life in Art*, and Pudovkin's *Film Technique* and *Film Acting*. I personally think that these are an actor's ABC.

I shall write not so much about acting, as the difference between stage and film acting. There are people who believe that film actors are not real actors, and it must be admitted that some of the people who believe this are actors themselves. But before going any further, ought we not to decide what we mean by an actor? *An actor is a person who tries to imitate humanity.* He spends his life learning the symbols of human behaviour, to reproduce them at will. In the theatre, there are four points to be made about the actor:

(1) *Rehearsal and preparation* before showing the finished article.

(2) For the stage player, continuity is unbroken.

(3) The stage actor is in complete control of his performance.

(4) The audience contributes towards the performance and is for the actor a source of inspiration.

These four conditions are inseparable from acting as a creative art. One must prepare exhaustively; one must maintain a sequence of ideas and emotions. The theatre helps the actor by its method of rehearsal. In the cinema we must find means of following the same path. The system of rehearsal is the most important factor of theatre work. Of the actor's struggle to incarnate his role, Pudovkin writes: "It might indeed be said that realism, the lifeline unity of the image, is a problem more pertinent and urgent to the film actor than even to the actor in the theatre".

Film acting offers none of these conditions. Firstly, rehearsal and performance are nearly always identical. Secondly, the script is a set of fragments which can be shot in any order, according to the will of the director and the technical necessities involved. Thirdly, in films, effects of pausing, of timing, tension and relaxation, are created in the cutting room by people who may never have seen the actors except on celluloid, and of whom many don't like actors either in the flesh or on celluloid. They are essentially technicians.

There is no reason, it should be pointed out here, why the work of the real actor should terminate before the editing process. I believe the actor should take a creative part in editing, as the finer polishing of his performance, and should be as close to it as to the director.

Fourthly, of course, the film actor has no audience. He creates his fragments of acting time after time without love, laughter or applause. He goes through it until the director is satisfied that he has got one good shot and one or two good covering shots in the can. Under present working conditions the amount of rehearsal possible in a film studio is very short when compared to the time that a stage actor can devote to his work. In any case, it is not altogether true that a film actor need come to his work unrehearsed. In most cases he receives the script at least a week before the film goes on the floor, and has got enough time to read and re-read the script and work out his approach to the part. The trouble is that, under the present factory system (that is to say, the more quickly a film is made, the cheaper will be its cost of production), the actor is bound to look upon film acting as the kind of acting which can be pushed through with the minimum of thought and preparation, provided he is slick in a purely surface way.

But under *ideal* conditions it is just as possible and just as necessary, I believe, to rehearse every shot of the film as minutely as every scene of a play, to sustain those breaks of continuity which for the actor are the most difficult to overcome. It is true that film acting is fragmentary, but it is quite wrong to pretend that any stage play (except for an occasional one-act play in which the characters never leave the stage) really preserves continuity for the actor. The play is divided into acts—two or three—and these acts divided sometimes into many scenes. The total can be as many as fifteen or twenty scenes. Also, the characters go on and off the stage. All these interruptions constitute the very acting in fragments which is complained of in film acting. The fragmentary nature of stage work is, in fact, overcome by systematic rehearsal over a long period, whereby the actor gets an idea of his part as a whole, and its relation to the play.

How much more, then, does the film actor, whose part is much more fragmentary, need rehearsal over a long period to overcome these breaks in continuity. In the early days, of course, scenes could be shot as they were played in the theatre. This was film theatre. No one thought of shooting a scene in any other way. The camera framed the scene at a fixed distance, and the actors went through it in stretches of 500 or 1,000 feet of film, and then another length of film was loaded into the camera. This went on until D. W. Griffith's development of the close-up, and his discovery of the great power of the camera to select. The second development was that of putting the camera on wheels—that is, tracking down a street, mounted on a car or a boat; and then came the discovery by the great Russian directors of the 1920's that new forms of tension, rhythm and excitement could be achieved by splitting up images, by putting one against the other in a particular order, which they called montage. These are reasons for the lack of continuity in film acting, and they are in fact the essence of film-making. To a film actor deeply interested in his job they will cease to be irritations and obstacles, and will be appreciated as a new means of expression.

It is true that in the film studio we are surrounded only by

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# GRIFFITH *and the Development of the Silent Film*

## Thorold Dickinson

BEFORE GRIFFITH, the movies were no more than a cheap substitute for live entertainment, a plain record easily reproduced of a single performance which could not otherwise reach a large public. True, the cinema possessed the advantage that the film camera could be transported anywhere on earth and could make an accurate photographic record of events for the newsreel and of stories played against any conceivable background.

But the handling of the camera was confined to the useful function of recording a clear view of its objective from a fixed pedestal. When the objects to be recorded could no longer be held within range of the lens, the camera was shifted to another position and the new action recorded against a different background. Later these scenes were joined together in the intended order to form a coherent story, newsreel or other diversion.

A wide range of entertainment was recorded thus in the early days of cinema. In France Méliès and Max Linder made dozens of fantasies and comedies which still count among the memorable primitives of the screen. The Italians developed a flair for ambitious historical pageantry, Guazzoni with films like *Quo Vadis* and D'Annunzio with *Cabiria*. The British potted into silent action short versions of the classics played by leading stage actors, Benson, Beerbohm Tree and many others. The Americans, ever down to earth, built comedies and dramas of the homeliest kind around the personalities of eccentrics like John Bunny, Flora Finch and Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Drew and a horde of he-men and she-women who could ride and fight and make love and look the same in two stories a week for fifty weeks in the year.

To the public movies were cheap, movies were easy to visit, available at any hour and no fixed hour, no intervals, low prices, hypnotic movement on the screen and nothing to think about. The few descriptive titles were short and simply expressed.

To the theatrical profession they were a curious part time exercise in Europe and beneath contempt in America. Among the forms of self-expression, the cinema did not exist. Before Griffith (B.G. as one might say).

Born at Crestwood, Kentucky, on January 22, 1875, David Wark Griffith was the son of a Southern family of Welsh descent, ruined financially by a tradition of gambling, and by the outcome of the American Civil War ten years earlier. His father, Jacob, rose by hard fighting to the rank of colonel in the Confederate cavalry, in which he was nicknamed Roaring Jake for possessing a voice which could carry five miles. Jacob missed promotion to brigadier by a few weeks and returned home, embittered by defeat, to scrape a living on his wrecked farm, served by the few faithful among his freed slaves.

Jacob brought up his firstborn, David, in an atmosphere of nostalgic regret for the old times and educated him to a taste for the sentimental literature of the Victorian age. And he died when David was ten years old, leaving his property heavily mortgaged and his family burdened with debts. The one asset which he passed to his son, apart from his abounding energy, was his dramatic sense, which expressed itself in a talent for giving public readings from Shakespeare and Dickens.

Jacob's widow was forced to sell up the homestead and move to Louisville, the capital, to earn her living. Before long she had to rope David in to help support his brothers and sisters. David left school at an early age and was put to work as an errand boy for a dry goods store to the embarrassment of himself and his school friends. He longed to become a writer and by his keenness won himself a job at a bookshop. Then at seventeen he tried his hand at cub reporting on the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. But lack of education lost him this position and he returned to bookselling, putting all the rest of his abundant energy into writing and amateur theatricals.

His talent in writing never developed beyond producing shallow, undisguised hokum. Theatricals won. At the age of twenty-two his regular features, good physique and amateur training gained him a place in the Meffert Stock Company at Louisville under the stage name of Lawrence Griffith. For ten years he travelled the United States, earning an intermittent living as an actor and peddling his efforts at writing plays, short stories and verse. Experience brought him no knowledge of the high society beloved of readers and theatre audiences, and even when Fanny Ward deigned to appear in his one professional play, *A Fool and a Girl*, at Washington in 1907, critics and audiences condemned the entertainment for its preoccupation with scenes of low life.

That summer at the age of thirty-two Griffith found himself in New York with no work and few prospects. For the second time in his life he chose to embarrass himself and his friends, this time by offering to write for the movies. He approached the Edison Vitagraph Company, the leading film producers of the day. Edwin S. Porter was their chief film director and had made his name four years earlier in directing the two best known primitives of the American Screen, *The Life of an American Fireman* in seven minutes and *The Great Train Robbery* in nine. But Porter would not accept Griffith as a writer and persuaded him to the humiliation of acting the rescuer in *Rescued from an Eagle's Nest*. Three days' work at five dollars a day. That was all.

Griffith had to descend yet further into the depths of the show world. He found work with the American Mutoscope (or peepshow) and Biograph (or cinema film) Company. He wrote for them two-minute subjects for nickel-in-the-slot machines and acted in them when required. The Company was in the doldrums. The moving spirit, Wallace McCutcheon, was dying down from old age, and directing two films a week was becoming a definite strain on his waning faculties. Griffith reluctantly took over the work with the proviso that, should he fail, he could return to writing and acting. So began his remarkable career in cinema.

He called himself the sausage machine. During the first three years of his new career he made three hundred and thirty films, half of them single reels and the rest four to five minute films, an average of one of each a week. In 1910 he began the practice of wintering in California, where interior scenes were made on outdoor stages for many years to come. He also began supervising the work of pupil directors : Thomas H. Ince, Mack Sennett, Donald Crisp, Stroheim, W. S. Van Dyke, Lowell Sherman, John Cromwell were among his pupil-assistants. These later became the back-bone of the American film industry. In 1911 he made his first two-reeler, *Enoch Arden*, but the distributors, ever behind the times, released each reel as a separate film at different dates, fearing

to break convention and hire out the two together. He stayed with Biograph until the middle of 1913 and left them the most sought-after sausage merchants in show business.

Griffith in those five years of incessant work had made Biograph pictures mean something to the public. He had lifted subjects from every conceivable source, pirating many, and had built up a stock company to play them, recruited from any walk of life but rarely the theatre. To this day we remember the names of his Biograph players : Mary Pickford, Lilian and Dorothy Gish, Mae Marsh, Robert Harron, Mack Sennett, Harry Carey, H. B. Walthall, Blanche Sweet, Claire McDowell and many others. They worked together, made their own costumes, developed plots and adaptations, took turns at rehearsal to find the most suitable casting, pooling their lives in their common pursuit. And they never lost interest in watching Griffith experimenting and innovating.

After two months of directing, Griffith began shifting his camera within a scene for dramatic effect. Next year he was goading his cameraman, Billy Bitzer, to try experiments with lighting, effects of firelight, lamplight, candle light, storm scenes. In California he introduced extreme longshots in landscapes and he brought his camera closer and closer to the players until he revealed only the face, the hands, the eyes, entirely for dramatic emphasis and never as a self-conscious stunt. In 1911 he began making a regular practice of cross-cutting scenes remote from each other to create suspense and excitement. He discovered the thrill of the chase when treated in this manner, for the chase had long been an asset in movies, but its tempo had been retarded by the practice of showing chased and chaser pass through each locality before one scene was shifted to the next. Then he found he could increase the tempo by cutting the film strips shorter and shorter and even by changing the speed of the camera itself. Film after film came from Biograph with something new in it, new faces, new methods of storytelling, new uses of the camera, new ideas of using scenes for comment and symbolism. And binding together the whole output was Griffith's own taste in drama, crude hokum, easily followed by his naive customers, drawn in the main from the immigrant population to whom English was still a foreign language and whose homes were cheap, shoddy apartments and lodging houses. The low life of the underdog and antipathy against the well-to-do were something after their own heart and something Griffith knew to the full. What he did not realise was that there was a subject which he knew even better, one on which he was to lavish all the technique he had developed during his six years of apprenticeship together with all the experiences of his childhood in the unhappy South. This fusion was to produce the first great motion picture.

At this time there were beginning to come from Europe the longer and more pretentious films drawn from history and classical literature to which I referred at the beginning of these notes. From France *Les Misérables* and *Queen Elisabeth* (with Sarah Bernhardt), from Italy *The Wandering Jew ;* in Egypt and Palestine the American Kalem Company made *From the Manger to the Cross*. These films took an hour or more to show and explored the content of their subjects to an extent that the shorter native American film had no chance to emulate.

Wintering in California early in 1913, Griffith tried his hand at making one of these films, and the news alarmed his employers in New York. When they saw the result, a Biblical subject in five reels called *Judith of Bethuliah*, they were horrified at its cost (32,000 dollars) and its breach with the convention of length : to them it was good only for Broadway and hopeless for the rest of the country. In fact they wrote it off as an eccentric serial and ordered Griffith to retire from direction and confine himself to supervising the work of others.

For the next twelve years Griffith lived and worked as a rebel against the formidable American film industry. He made millions of dollars for himself and the backers he drew from outside the industry, and he became the most famous figure in international cinema, only to lose both fortune and standing in his exhausting struggle. But before he surrendered in 1925 and took a job with Paramount at a salary of three thousand dollars a week, under conditions which were to lead to the complete downfall of his career, he had repaid every one of his creditors. And although his great powers inevitably dwindled through the strain of these twelve years, he never lost his sense of financial honesty to his dying day.

In 1913 Griffith, his technical crew and his stock company of players, left Biograph and filmed a series of hour-length versions of current Broadway plays for a new concern called Reliance-Majestic. But Griffith was dissatisfied. The technique which he had developed during the past five years had set him ahead of his rivals commercially but was worthy of a better and different class of subject. He was learning from the example of the new films from Europe that what you say on the screen is as important as the way you say it, so long as both the content and technique are within the grasp of the simple mass audience.

Then he found a subject into which he could really get his teeth, a melodrama called *The Clansman* by Thomas Dixon, which presented the Civil War and its aftermath from the point of view of the defeated South, the nostalgic environment of Griffith's childhood. With his backer, Harry Aitkin, and his still faithful company, Griffith left Majestic and raised from the resources of his unit and from friends outside the industry the fantastic sum of 110,000 dollars, nearly four times the amount which he had been condemned for wasting on *Judith of Bethuliah*. On the production they spent 60,000 dollars and the rest of the money on overheads and exploitation before the first showing of the film. They made the film in nine weeks in the summer of 1914. He staged battle scenes with action stretching at times four miles from the camera. He filmed intimate scenes in close up with restraint in the playing that brings conviction to this day, more than a generation later. He edited the film at night, while by day he directed another subject of social injustice in modern times, *The Mother and the Law*, which he hoped would achieve popular success and pay for the losses on his courageous experiment. The reverse was to be the fact.

*The Clansman*, brilliantly renamed by Dixon *The Birth of a Nation*, achieved a sensational success. When the film tradesmen contemptuously offered to show it as a serial in nine weekly instalments, Aitkin hired theatres, playhouses wherever possible and charged for the first time full playhouse prices for non-continuous performances. In a few months of 1915 the film brought back a million dollars. In 1916 it was given a long season at Drury Lane before touring Great Britain. In twenty years it grossed twenty million dollars. Griffith was the reluctant envy of all his rivals.

Controversy raged from the first day of its showing. The melodrama had had a stormy career on the stage, but Griffith was amazed and disturbed by the blast of protest which his simple, personal interpretation of the negro question in the South aroused in the North. He had stumbled

on the power of the screen to stir the intelligence through the emotions. Even though he used no filmscript, his unique gift of keeping a whole subject in his head in balance and with detachment throughout the closely detailed working period of production, and his brilliant use of the camera and of editing, these assets gave every moment in the film its full, clear effect to audiences of every mental level.

He was bewildered, as any entertainer would be who had stumbled into a sermon that split his audience into opposing camps. Yet the sermon was so dramatic, so compelling to the emotions, that the public were drawn to it like bees to poisoned honey. He was particularly hurt at being denounced on humanitarian grounds, he who had made dozens of films (had indeed just finished shooting one) attacking social injustice. His blind spot was that he was too insensitive to question the racial bias in his upbringing.

He fought back, accusing those who would ban his film of the sin of intolerance. Millions of dollars in profit were feeding his independent, rebellious spirit. *Intolerance* should be the title of the most massive film of all time, one which would overawe his detractors and reduce them to silence. It should be a film about an idea.

Griffith and his company worked continuously on his new film from July 1915 to July 1916. To it he added the whole of *The Mother and the Law*, itself a study of modern social intolerance. By September 1916, when he first showed it in New York, the film had cost him and his backers nearly two million dollars. If it had been made in 1936 with a simple sound track, it would have cost twelve millions, to-day something over thirty millions. Only dictators can cause films to be made on that scale these days.

Temporarily, and in his own field, Griffith was a dictator. Envious Hollywood directors shaved their heads when he, to avert baldness, shaved his. The actor's vanity persisted in him. Had he possessed the qualities of the true writer, he might never have acquired the talent to control actors which he developed in the theatre. He might never have achieved the popular success which this talent brought him and with it the resources to make so massive a film. But if he had possessed both talents of writing and acting, in addition to his gift for inventing new techniques, he would have made a popular success of *Intolerance* instead of a distinguished failure. He would have smoothed the way for the film of ideas, not set up the barrier labelled *box-office poison* which has since warned off all but the most adventurous promoters.

In *The Birth of a Nation* he had followed the fortunes of two families whom the war divided. He had shown that a film can adopt a more complex continuity than the simple, straight thread that was the prevailing convention. And he had proved that the public would support something more than the gossip film, they could appreciate a quite complicated story in which a large number of characters illustrate a background of ideas. Now he chose to experiment further.

In *Intolerance* Griffith took one idea and set it in the foreground in advance of his characters. To illustrate the theme *Love's Struggle throughout the Ages* (the hokum end of the idea), he took four examples of intolerance and developed them in parallel in such a way that the emotions could be stirred only after the intelligence had appreciated the parallel relationship, for example, between the academic point of view of the Pharisees and the snobbish policy of a modern charity organisation. Three of his examples were apt and could have held the mass audience—the persecution of Christ, the massacre of the Huguenots and the exploitation of the workers and in particular of the wife of one unemployed worker in *The Mother and the Law*.

But the fourth example Griffith chose more from a sense of showmanship than from any deep conviction of its aptness to his theme, and on it he lavished most of the time and money at his disposal. Ancient Babylon was in the news. An explorer had recently published a book about his discoveries of relics of Belshazzar's rule, and this fired Griffith's imagination and distorted his judgment. He invented a banal episode against the background of Cyrus the Persian's invasion of Babylon. The audience was supposed to like Belshazzar and resent the treachery of his high priest in opening the gates of the city to Cyrus. In fact the audience was overwhelmed by the spectacle provided, ummoved by the shallow hokum characters of Belshazzar and his opponents and numbed by magnificence never attempted before or since—a hall two hundred feet high and a quarter of a mile long peopled by 4,000 extras, or an army of 16,000 extras filling the screen in one composition—to such an extent that the onlookers lost the drift of the theme and could not distinguish who was being intolerant to whom. Yet this was all that really mattered.

Griffith, sound character that he was, took full responsibility for the losses on his second experiment and spent all his earnings until 1923 in paying off in full the debts incurred. Meanwhile he presented the film in London on the day on which his country declared war on Germany, and he was acclaimed by royalty, statesmen and public as artist and propagandist. As such the British Government invited him to make *Hearts of the World* to arouse mass sympathy in America for the war in Europe. But the film took a year to make and had only six months' circulation before the armistice, when it was withdrawn from a public tired of war. He took so long because he discovered that the action of a real war is almost impossible to photograph as the background to a fiction. He had to recreate most of his war scenes in California, bending the war to the demands of his story rather than making a story out of the real war. Perhaps there was not enough hokum in real war. Certainly the film itself revealed little experience of genuine war conditions. But the Griffith touch was there, for those who wanted it.

The trouble now was that the touch was not renewing itself. The war was making the masses less unsophisticated, and the very qualities which formerly endeared the Master (as they were calling him) to them were now growing tedious to their slicker tastes.

Lonely, he joined in 1919 Chaplin, Fairbanks and Pickford in forming the United Artists distribution concern. He had to make money to pay his debts. There was no time for a long recuperative holiday. He hammered out quickies like *True-Heart Susie*, he recaptured a flash of the old imaginative fire in *Broken Blossoms*, fruit of his London experiences, and with this he achieved a retrospective success in a repertory season of his works in New York.

There followed *The Idol Dancer* (no good), *Way Down East* (highly successful combination of East-side melodrama and spectacle), *Orphans of the Storm* (not very convincing story against a background of the French Revolution), some comedies, and a sad film about the inflation in Germany called *Isn't Life Wonderful*? But the critics and the public said No, and Griffith went to Paramount, a rebel

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# FLEAPIT NIGHTS

## Laurence Edmonds

TUCKED AWAY BETWEEN a fried fish shop and a confectioner and tobacconist, and no more imposing than either, stands our local Fleapit. It is scarcely larger than a parish hall, certainly not more luxurious, and its name is as modest as its prices, which are low enough to attract sufficient customers to ensure a full house for its thrice-weekly change of programme.

It spurns the bold lettering and lurid colouring of its rich circuit relations in the imposing High Street sites, and substitutes ill-formed and sometimes mis-spelt phraseologies of its own. The hand is unprofessional and is probably the work of its non-uniformed commissionaire Jack—aptly named man-of-all-trades who acts as assistant ticket tout ("Don't bother Mabel in the box, mate, she's eating 'er tea"), chief char and poster-plasterer.

If the stucco facade is faded, grimy and crumbling, the interior is a setting even less apt for the impossibly fantastic events shown on a yellowing screen day in, day out, between 1.30 and 10.30 p.m. six days a week, and 4.30 and 10.30 p.m. on Sundays.

The lady of the box-office, having condescended to remove her massive bust from the counter (a difficult feat), produces a well-thumbed ticket; and you do battle with a cracked, unoiled swing door. Once through, you make your way cautiously, rarely being escorted by a torch, over lounging legs, to whatever part of the dingy interior you prefer.

Do not expect comfort. The upholstery is as ancient as the building. As likely as not you will find yourself balanced uncertainly round a protruding spring in your seat, and the arms should never be leaned on with confidence. An antique clock hangs to the right of the screen, but is not to be trusted. After all, what is time to these spectators, thrice-weekly transported to the colourful ends of the earth on the yellowing screen? Like all addicts, they think only in terms of opening and closing times.

These addicts do not patronise the flicks for the weaker forms of entertainment: our fleapit, like hundreds of others throughout the country—the broken-down spivs competing with the jumped-up masters of the trade—specialises in the outsize version. It exists on exaggeration. In the course of the last few years, our fleapit has been the rendezvous for Frankenstein and most of his relatives, Dracula, the Devil Doctor, the Wolf Man, the Cat People, a brood of vampire bats and zombies that flit, creep, growl and grope across its ancient screen. Sandwiched between these monsters are exotic Technicolor fantasies set in Cairo, Baghdad, Algiers, Istanbul, and other romantic centres of beauty, vice and Sabu.

When Maria Montez and Yvonne de Carlo are resting from lush distant adventures, the cowboys take over. An inexhaustible supply of Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, William Elliott and Johnny Mack Brown fill in the gaps, and are warmly welcomed; a more rare type of reinforcement is the "startling" sex film, preferably those which the poster-painter may advertise in bright scarlet as BANNED FOR 15 YEARS or STRICTLY FOR ADULTS ONLY. These include continental imports such as *Bitter Rice*—POSITIVELY NOBODY UNDER 16 ADMITTED say the notices, but an awful lot of young-looking 16-year-olds can be seen outside, scratching among marbles and chewing-gum for admission money. Along with *Bitter Rice*, the American *Street Corner* created the biggest queues in the fleapit's recent history. Jack-of-all-trades really let himself go on this occasion. His immature but resourceful hand plastered the hoardings with grim warnings: VICE KINGS STALK THE STREETS AT NIGHT. The curiosity of every responsible parent was roused by his frank question—IS THIS HOW YOUR DAUGHTER SPENDS HER EVENINGS? Needless to say, the daughters turned up in full force, but were doomed to disappointment. They considered it milk-and-water stuff.

If you want uninhibited enjoyment, come down on a Saturday afternoon and join the kids in clapping, shouting, cheering, whistling, booing and hissing a couple of stereotyped adventures. Do not be put out by a shower of nuts down your neck, or orange peel tripping you in the aisle as you leave. I am told that some of the children enter the cinema promptly at opening time, armed with stout packets of sandwiches, sweets, cakes, lemonade, and—in some cases—cigarettes, which they consume at frequent intervals during the programme's treble showing: replete with food and flicks, they leave at 10.30 p.m.

Others, who are content with a mere three hours, pop into the fish shop and bring bags of steaming chips, well saturated in vinegar, to the 7.30 performance.

Occasionally an action film which also happens to possess real qualities is shown, by some freak of chance, at the fleapit. A recent example was Ford's *Wagonmaster*, which had no big circuit booking and shouldn't, as far as the addicts were concerned, have had a fleapit booking either. A concert of catcalls greeted the shots of covered wagons threading through breathtaking Western scenery, and every attempt to turn this horse opera into a grand horse opera was received with exaggerated yawns and sighs and shuffling. (Is there anything more infuriating than these audible signs of boredom—as well as the usual crunching, sucking, prods and kicks—when you yourself are being highly entertained?) A minor gunfight near the end of the film revived interest temporarily, but by the time the last few feet of splendid landscapes were being unrolled, the main body of the audience was having a cup of char in the café down the road.

In the light of this and similar depressing experiences, it is understandable of the management to prefer *The Savage Horde* and *The Mysterious Desperado* (to support *White Heat*), and promise us that Tarzan is coming shortly. Years of this diet have made the fleapit's habitués unappreciative of different fare, which will almost certainly bring wrath on the heads of the management.

Tarzan and Trigger, Karloff and Carlo, flaming guns and clenched fists continue to be the realities that matter, and it can be imagined how three evenings a week at the fleapit give a fillip to the emotions, imagination, speech, dress and habits of the local kids. And how much to be preferred surely, is this crude, frank assault to the superficial pretentious shams for the older audiences of the Gaudeon? I look forward to *Whispering Skull* and *Fury of the Congo* . . .

# PERSONAL PLEASURES

## *Some Films by James Broughton*

## Gavin Lambert

"JUST RELAX", James Broughton is apt quietly to say, when somebody begins to discuss his films with undue seriousness—like the Department of Mental Hygiene for the State of Montana faced with the reaction of public schools to *Mother's Day*, or like a New York devotee of experimental cinema, greedy for symbols and images of maladjustment—"just relax, and try to surrender yourself . . .".

The advice is not difficult to follow, because the four 16 mm. films this young Californian poet has so far made have an informal, inviting quality that sets them apart from many American experimental films that one approaches with nervous interest. As affirmations of calm joy and ironic affection for human life, they would be freshly appealing under any circumstances. If a parallel is to be searched for, the nearest perhaps is Vigo: James Broughton's films are slighter, they show less passion and substance, but they have something of the same freedom, intuition and natural indifference to convention. They are allied, too, in the completely independent circumstances of their production, and the resulting modesty and, sometimes, improvisations of technique.

James Broughton's first film, *Mother's Day* (1948) remains his most complex and substantial: a capricious twenty-minute souvenir, recollected in the nostalgic style of a family album, of a West Coast childhood, disinterred from the rituals and fetishes, the inconsequent procession of faces, clothes, private belongings, mysterious and banal incidents of a large household, as they recur to a poet's memory. The film divides itself into a suite, each crowded and allusive movement linked by a witty title; its action contains no dialogue or commentary, but is underlined by a most apt and delicate music score by Howard Brubeck. A painted miniature introduces the first image of Mother, as a young girl, with late Victorian ringlets and a soft, remote expression. In the flesh she turns out to be rather large, voluptuous, energetic, with a taste for exotic hats and, more surprisingly, for Father, the lean, respectable, whiskery man she marries (see opposite). Her own upbringing, and no doubt the influence of Father, make it her firm belief that children must grow up into lovely ladies and gentlemen, than which there is nothing in the world more lovely; alas, she is in for surprises and disappointments. In the house, of which we see little more than a bare facade and one alarmingly overfurnished room (reminiscent of *The Magnificent Ambersons*), all is correct, formal and properly lovely when Mother is on the scene. But the children play their secret games, inhabit their private worlds and, in fact, grow up in derelict alleys and abandoned back yards. In a brilliant sequence, at once touching, mysterious and comic, we see the children at their games, but played by grown-ups—a girl of 20 bowling a hoop, a college boy playing with a dustbin lid—and this trick with time, revealing simultaneously the future in the past, the image of childhood disguised as the adulthood it becomes, is extraordinarily effective. It is typical, too, of the sly tenderness and fantasy that informs all Broughton's work.

Typical also in its simultaneous perceptions is the figure of Mother herself—embodiment of claustrophobic family conventions, sometimes absurd, sometimes formidable, and yet—because her girlhood has been glimpsed in a Victorian miniature, because at the end of the film, hopefully dressed for the times in riding breeches, she surveys an empty room and suspects a little that the times have taken those lovely ladies and gentlemen away from her—pathetic as well. Broughton has written her epitaph: "Once upon a time there was a very beautiful and refined young girl who had a great many suitors. But she married the wrong one. Then she had a great many children and she did not know what to do with them either". This is an unusually subtle, many-sided film, leisurely yet sharp, poetic and unsparing.

Two other films, *Adventures of Jimmy* and *Loony Tom* (*The Happy Lover*), form a kind of entr'acte to another complete experiment, *Four in the Afternoon*—all of which were finished this year. *Adventures of Jimmy*, which its maker describes as "an amorous fable in documentary style", is a casual parody of the maladjusted literary and film hero, typified by the unhappy innocent in the Big City. Jimmy, child of the backwoods, discovers the confusion and pressures of a metropolis; he is stalked by ladies of the town, he tries psychoanalysis and—for an equally brief, unsuccessful interlude—prayer: he lodges in the slums, exhausts himself in a dance hall, wonders dejectedly if he is not attractive. But he remains obstinately healthy, optimistic and uncomplicated underneath, and ends by carrying off some charming girls to his little backwoods cabin and sitting snugly in the midst of a spreading harem. *Loony Tom*, which is wittier, sharper, more of a whole, is devoted, its creator explains, "to the sprightly cause of spreading joy about the world". A gay, erratic pantomime figure in baggy trousers, a bowler hat perched on a tousled head, with a small moustache, irrepressible smile and rolling eyes, Loony Tom prances through the countryside making immediate and outrageous love to every woman he encounters. The rhythm of a chase, the exaggerated postures and hectic situations remind one of a Mack Sennett comedy, but the slapstick is not an end in itself, and neither cruel nor destructive. It is poetic slapstick. Loony Tom, disturber of an artist's idyll and a bevy of sturdy farm girls, is observed with tenderness and sublime approval; love and wooing are his sole and natural occupations, they express his simple, ecstatic confidence in happiness. The charming lyric that accompanies the action from time to time emphasises this—"the happy lover", as the subtitle explains. The success of the film is due in equal part to the wonderful miming of Loony Tom by Kermit Sheets, who has also assisted Broughton on the production of all his films.

A film suite, *Four in the Afternoon*, is based on four poems by James Broughton, published in his collection, *Musical Chairs*, last year. The films are not, though, illustrations: the poems are used more as programme music might be used for the scenario of a ballet. The first, *Game Little Gladys*, takes up a favourite theme, the daydreams and rituals of childhood. Gladys summons imaginary prospective husbands—"which one will count me his true sweetheart"?—but before she can make up her mind they all disappear. The second, *The Gardener's Son*, is an adolescent daydream, the light infatuation of a young boy for a girl, hazed over with the boy's

(*continued on page* 96)

*Above: Two scenes from "Mother's Day". Left, Father; right, the children-adults at play*

*Above: Two scenes from "Loony Tom". Left, Tom about to leap from the bushes, and right, in an amorous interlude. Kermit Sheets as Loony Tom.*

*Below: "Four in the Afternoon". Left, "Game little Gladys" and her imagined lovers; right, "The Gardener's Son" and his love.*

# THE FESTIVALS

## EDINBURGH

TWO YEARS AGO, commenting on the 1949 Edinburgh Festival in SIGHT AND SOUND, James Beveridge wrote: "The missing quality is this tightness, sureness, point and edge. What are all these films, each one of them, there for? Whom do they speak to? The fierce, uncompromising experimental film can stand up for itself; the unclear, ill-defined, not-thought-out documentary film cannot . . ."

There were some good films at Edinburgh this year, but the same qualification applies in general even more strongly. To begin with, nearly all the most rewarding films were not "documentary", which distinguished itself directly in *Family Portrait*, *David* and *Waters of Time*, in an American film, Ben Maddow's very human and perceptive study of old people in a South Carolina town, *The Steps of Age*, in a new film made by Sucksdorff in India, and some parts of a Canadian Film Board programme. The latter included Gudrun Parker's charming *Opera School*, and two more of Robert Anderson's extraordinary concealed camera studies of psychopathic cases. It also included a singularly unfortunate attempt by the same director to dramatise a psychological subject, *Breakdown*. Otherwise, there seemed little beyond Rouquier's *Le Sel de la Terre*, which began as an attractive personal impression of the Camargue and stiffened into some correct sponsored sequences. Which is not very much for a year of documentary.

But the fact that these Edinburgh programmes summarised very acutely the present problem of documentary occupied many exponents and supporters of the original documentary movement at the Festival. Grierson, Basil Wright, Forsyth Hardy, Norman Wilson and others convened a special lunch to discuss the present hiatus, and one reflection this causes is how few of the original documentarists are still practising in this country. Grierson produces for Group 3, Rotha came to present his feature film *No Resting Place*, Cavalcanti is in Brazil, Harry Watt migrated to features some years ago. . . Sponsorship difficulties apart, the crux of the problem seems to be that no new generation of equivalent enthusiasm has arisen to replace them.

*Edinburgh: Elena Varzi, one of Italy's most talented new actresses, appears in Malaparte's "Cristo Proibito"*

The lunch discussion produced a positive and promising suggestion; the Edinburgh authorities plan a meeting between film makers, sponsors and others at next year's Festival, at which the whole issue will be considered, in the hope at any rate of clearing the ground and defining the nature of the problem.

Enthusiasm seems now to be canalised into work loosely classifiable as experimental. Apart from such feature films as *The Man in the White Suit*, *The Magic Garden*, and Malaparte's *Cristo Proibito* (and the stereoscopic entertainments, which drew packed houses throughout), some 16mm. American films provided the most pleasant surprises. They included James Broughton's *Mother's Day* and *Loony Tom;* a fascinating account in colour of a Brazilian ritual, *Uirapuru*, by Sam Zebba; and *Bird Hunt*, by Richard Hawkins, about the first encounter of two young boys with inflicted death, in the shape of a bird they shoot down. Completely different, and equally individual, was a witty puppet film from Czechoslovakia by Jiri Trnka, *Song of the Prairie*, a gentle parody of the American western.

By widening its scope to "realist" and "experimental" as well as "documentary", there is no doubt that Edinburgh has greatly livened its programmes; but the implications of this for documentary —which receives solid showings every morning, and is numerically far superior to the other entries—cannot be ignored.

GAVIN LAMBERT.

## VENICE

The sensation of the XII International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art at Venice was *Rasho Mon* (In the Woods), shown early, discussed enthusiastically throughout the Festival, and the eventual prize winner. It is a most impressive film. Sheltering from a downpour under the splintered ruins of a graceful wooden building, three poor men philosophise about truth. They express their bewilderment and anguish through few words and much mimicry, for them an innate art that replaces the impulsive gesture, formalising, intensifying, crystallising every experience. They belong to 12th century Japan. One was witness at a murder trial. He tells his tale according to the tradition to which he belongs—*graphically*. The film *shows* it: first according to the testimony of the accused brigand, a passionate, exultant savage, glorying in his conquest of a beauty he raped in the woods before the eyes of her husband, whom he had tied to a tree, then killed in honourable combat; then the wife gives her version, the husband's spirit gives his, and the witness another. All are different and partly false. Where is the truth; what is it? In the end an act of humanity saves the three men from cynicism and despair: chance confronts the poorest of them with a foundling, symbol of hope, and he adopts it.

A triangle, flashbacks, a happy ending. And yet this film is new in its form and manner, fresh in its re-creation of antiquity, outstanding in its use of the film medium. It is photographed entirely outdoors by Gazuo Miyagawa, who uses sunshine shimmering through leaves, all the patterns formed by nature, and the movements of human figures, their faces and hands, to make pictures

*"The River". A scene from an Indian dance sequence in Renoir's film.*

*Edinburgh: A scene from the American "The Steps of Age", one of the best films of the festival*

of tremendous eloquence and beauty. Director Achira Curosawa presents the spectator with something like a rediscovery of the film medium: the intensity and sheer virtuosity of his brilliant players is recorded to the maximum advantage, sometimes in longish takes with exciting camera movement, often by rapid montage. And with all this, the picture has classic simplicity and purity. I understand no Japanese and little of the Italian subtitles. For me, *Rasho Mon* is, therefore, the supreme example of the true sound film: one whose pictorial narrative maintains its own continuity, strengthened, blended with, but not interrupted by sound.

Jean Renoir's *The River* (one of the three International prize winners) is another feast for the eyes. In the graceful, leisurely manner it shows the beauty of certain Indian rituals and their meaning, the tranquil charm of daily life in an English household in a comparatively prosperous village. Claude Renoir has photographed it wonderfully in colour, excelling in the mysterious transparence of night blues on the river. Jean Renoir brings poetry and warmth to the screenplay, and there are snatches of sound—children's voices in the night, national music—that haunt the memory. But there is a puerile "woman's magazine" feeling in the story of adolescent love that makes his choice of the subject incomprehensible to me, and, in the final analysis, unjustified.

The first film directed by Peter Lorre, who also plays the name part, *Der Verlorene*, had an unnecessarily stormy passage: first accepted, then rejected and finally re-entered, it and Lorre, who was present, had considerable success. He made it in Hamburg, choosing a true war-time story as his subject. It concerns a schizophrenic, a brilliant doctor, whose devotion to his calling is frustrated by murderous impulses induced by a woman's disloyalty. Though Lorre denies any intentional symbolism, the film, too, is split in two, giving a moving if not particularly original study of a schizophrenic, and an altogether admirable picture of wartime chaos, including a glimpse of the resistance movement in Germany. Though ponderous at times, the film has distinction, and Lorre reveals himself as a fine director of actors. It is certainly one of the best post-war German pictures.

The U.S.A. appears to have taken European festivals seriously for the first time. Besides a strong selection, including *Ace in the Hole* (also an International prize winner), *Fourteen Hours* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, she sent a delegation headed by Irene Dunne as a very graceful ambassador. I have no space to consider here either *Streetcar* (special prize for a filmed play and acting prize for Vivien Leigh) or *Murder in the Cathedral* (prize for décor and costumes), which was well received by the Italian critics. Both will be reviewed later in SIGHT AND SOUND.

All in all the selection of films was a strong one, justifying the Mostra as an artistic occasion. France held her own with *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne* (third International prize), *Le Nuit est Mon Royaume* (with a prize for Jean Gabin as the best actor) and Jean Delannoy's *Le Garcon Sauvage*, a horrifyingly realistic story about a prostitute's illegitimate son, distinguished by Henri Jeanson's wonderful dialogue. Autumn being the season when Italy's big films are not yet ready, her selection was comparatively weak: Germi's *La Citta si difende* won a prize, although I much preferred Emmer's *Paris is always Paris*, because of its light charm, reminiscent of *Sunday in August*. Far and away the most successful British entry was *Lavender Hill Mob* (script prize for T. E. B. Clark), *White Corridors* and *No Resting Place* producing little impression.

Of the subsidiary manifestations I should like to single out three. The film costume exhibition, for which there can be nothing but the highest praise—it remains only to be hoped that more countries will contribute to it; the congress of the Federation of Film Clubs, now retitled the International Film Academy, which passed some important resolutions, all aimed to protect and stimulate the artistic side of the cinema, and which is gaining strength and definition as an organisation; and the congress of the International Federation of Producers, joined this year by the U.S.A.

Some new developments in the Mostra itself have considerable importance. One is regrettable: it is the inclusion in the regulations of a clause prohibiting the presentation of films that are primarily political. Granted that in *practice* this will make little difference, because the interpretation of what is or is not political must vary according to the views of those responsible: at present *Four in a Jeep* is the kind of film that would be banned, while those propagating the Catholic philosphy (quite rightly) are not, nor was *A Letter from Africa*, at Italian documentary including a kind of return visit to the battlefields of Tobruk, El Alamein and Sollum, which had a nationalist note. The clause gives formal recognition to a kind of discrimination that is dangerous and cannot be reconciled with artistic aims.

On the other hand the organisers have intensified their selectivity in general, reducing the number of films shown—a welcome move if critics and public are to be given a programme of reasonably high artistic standard. Finally, for the first time, on the initiative of Dr. Antonio Petrucci, the Festival films were shown at a large cinema in the industrial town of Mestre. Even if, as has been suggested, this was done partly to counter the criticism that the Festival at the Lido is accessible only to the rich, the move itself is an admirable one and has, apparently, been very successful: the workers have flocked to the shows, sometimes giving more enthusiastic ovations to the films than was the case at the Lido; this was so when Renoir took *The River* to Mestre; *Lavender Hill Mob* and *White Corridors* also scored great popular successes there.

CATHERINE DE LA ROCHE

*Aldo Fabrizi and Lucia Bose in Emmer's latest film, "Paris est toujours Paris", shown at Venice*

S. M. Eisenstein

# REVALUATION

## *October*

## (U.S.S.R., 1928)

Derick Grigs and Guy Coté

*A Soviet critic, V. Smirnov, wrote of Eisenstein's first film,* Strike: "*It was a philosophic reply to those who held that the individual played an exceptional role in history. In this film the individual roles were subordinated. The living mass, acting in the tempo and scenes characteristic of Eisenstein, let the audience perceive its own power. . . . A new road had been found, new possibilities and new horizons loomed up—but a new individual hero, reflecting the new values, was still to be created. The mass hero expressed the new values. But that was not enough. It was abstract . . .*".

*In his two films that followed,* Potemkin *and* October, *Eisenstein elaborated this presentation of the mass hero. It was not until* The General Line—*begun before* October, *but interrupted and restarted a year later—that he attempted to focus on an individual, to humanise his material in the person of a peasant woman. But neither this film nor its predecessor,* October, *was generally popular in the Soviet Union; both were considered too complex, too calculated, and the word "formalism" began to rear its ugly head. It was not until almost ten years later—after an inconclusive experiment in Mexico, and other projects never fully realised—that Eisenstein once more found unqualified public favour with* Alexander Nevski.

"*October*". *Above, Lenin at the Finland Station; below, an episode in the storming of the Winter Palace*

*The paradox of* October *is that of a film with ostensible popular sympathies, surveying an episode of history in the mass, unconcerned with individual characterisation, yet conceived in terms of intellectual exposition and allusive style that makes it remote, if not incomprehensible, to the audience for whom it was intended and whose sympathies it specifically aimed to engage. This style is based on montage, the effect of which many critics have compared to music. In* Soviet Cinema (*Falcon Press*), *Thorold Dickinson describes its development and the impression made on Eisenstein by a Japanese 'Kabuki' Theatre performance in Moscow: "As he had seen 'Kabuki' mount their performances gesture by gesture, so he was now able to mount his films, shot by shot, in such a way that one plus one might be said certainly to make two, and at the same time to make something greater and quite different from its component parts. He studied the content of the shot, its actual length compared with its apparent length, as dictated by the speed with which the human eye can assimilate a simple or complex composition in shape and movement . . .". In an article written for* Experiment in the Film (*Grey Walls Press*), *the Soviet director, Grigori Roshal—in a survey omitting any mention of* October, *now politically unsatisfactory in its native country—comments on Eisenstein: "Montage made it possible to reveal the profound meaning of events with impressive clarity, and to convey the musical feeling of the theme in a silent film. . . . He only finds scope in the broad movement of great populous scenes. They are the best in all his films".*

*Eisenstein was the dialectician of the Russian cinema, unlike Pudovkin, its humanist, and Dovzhenko, its poet. Perhaps this explains his sporadic difficulties in coming to terms with his regime and his audience: he projected ideas before people, and people change less quickly.* October *has been unavailable for some years*

*in this country, and the National Film Library made it available again only a few months ago. Its two critics, Derick Grigs and Guy Cote, are connected both with the Oxford University Film Society, and the Oxford Experimental Film Group: they describe the fresh impact it makes to-day.*

WHEN ONE CONSIDERS how much has been written by Sergei Eisenstein, his critics and his historians, about the principles of montage that were developed for *October*, it is all the more remarkable that, at the age of twenty-nine, he planned and completed the film in a mere three months.

Eisenstein had been working on *The General Line* when the Government commissioned him, in 1927, to make a film for the tenth anniversary of the Revolution. With the concentrated, communicative enthusiasm which is evident in both his films and his writing, he set to work with Alexandrov and Tisse, slave-driving his assistants into impossible day and night schedules: the three frequently had to dope themselves in order to stay awake. The result, adapted from a book by an American, John Reed, who had lived in Leningrad during the Revolution, was a two-hour representation of the events that followed the establishment of the Provisional Government between February and October, 1917: the flight of Kerensky, the attack on the Winter Palace, and the triumph of Lenin.

The film was photographed almost entirely on location. Pudovkin, who was also making a Festival film, *The End of St. Petersburg*, recalls: "I bombarded the Winter Palace from the *Aurora* while Eisenstein bombarded it from the fortress of St. Peter and Paul. One night I knocked away part of the balustrading of the roof, and was scared I might get into trouble, but luckily enough the same night Sergei broke 200 windows in private bedrooms". The part of Lenin was given to a Moscow factory worker who resembled him; Trotsky was completely eliminated from the reconstruction; Kerensky became an object of crude ridicule: historical accuracy was subordinated to the Party line. At the premiere, *October* was shown with an orchestral score by Edmund Meisel, who also wrote the music for *Potemkin* and *Berlin*.

*October* caused quite a stir outside Russia. Called *Ten Days That Shook The World* by the German distributors who wanted to give it a more "popular" name, it suffered from censorship in almost every country. The copies were mutilated on religious or political grounds: most American versions, for instance, omit the sequence of the "Gods" described below. *October* was first shown in England at the London Film Society and subsequently denied public exhibition; later it was shown by other film societies. The film is now banned in the Soviet Union.

*October* is the most brilliant and intellectual of Eisenstein's films. It is not as moving as *Potemkin*, as human as *The General Line;* it lacks the grandeur of *Alexander Nevsky;* but it is cleverer and more inventive than any of them. Here we see the author of endless abstruse essays on film form and montage improvising laboratory experiments, putting his theories into vivid effect on the screen.

When Eisenstein wanted to explain montage to his pupils at the Higher State Institute of Cinema in Moscow, his favourite illustration was from Chinese hieroglyphs: in his words, "Door plus ear=eavesdrop . . . that is montage in a nutshell". It is difficult to distinguish the term from "editing", with which it overlaps. But the difference is that in routine editing each shot arises naturally out of its predecessor, whereas montage establishes a connection between unrelated images, the "collision" of shots seen one after another, producing from them a new idea.

Many of the refinements of montage theory which Eisenstein elaborated in his books are illustrated in *October*. Even in the titles he uses timing, placing and shock capitals for dramatic ends. Among the realistic effects may be included both the brilliant impression of a machine gun firing (created by rapidly inter-cutting light and dark shots taken from different angles) and the series of close-ups in which the gross and spiteful faces of the bourgeoisie jeer at the "traitors" of the machine gun corps. Here the director, as is his custom, sets his scene through the selection of a handful of significant details.

Eisenstein's innovation in *October* was "intellectual" montage: a method which he sometimes reiterates to the point of boredom. Here he uses symbols to express abstract ideas. The sequence in which the disintegration of the imperial statue represents the fall of Czardom is later run backwards so that the statue reassembles itself during the reaction. The royalists' claim to be fighting for "God and Country" is ridiculed by successive shots of military decorations, of elaborate churches and rituals, and finally of gods and idols in a descending scale of barbarism—the implication being that religion itself is an object of mockery. At times, the director's devotion to his new method over-reaches itself, as in the clumsy parallel drawn between the chant of compromise from Lenin's opponents and the sight of women strumming harps. Sometimes an artificial event is created by cross-cutting geographically unrelated images: when war breaks out the scene of a soldier cowering in a trench is intercut with scenes in a munitions factory, so that he seems to shrink away from a massive gun which is being lowered by a winch. The implied comment is as vivid as a political cartoon.

It has been argued that Eisenstein's montage technique did not survive into the sound film because the latter, concerned with telling a story rather than conducting an argument, could convey intellectual concepts better with words than with pictures. For the modern film-maker, this is the obvious way out: but there should still be plenty of scope for the kind of harmony of word and symbol found, as Mr. Karel Reisz recently pointed out, in certain films of Basil Wright and Humphrey Jennings, and also used by feature directors, as in the opening sequence of *The Third Man*. One may also regret the neglect of another favourite device of Eisenstein's, much used in *October:* overlapping movement. The editor here creates a sense of relentless power by the slowness with which the drawbridge is raised, through his overlapping shots taken from contrasted angles. The impression is reinforced by glimpses of detail, such as the woman's hair lifted as the gap widens, or the horse suspended by its harness over the edge.

These methods, ingenious though they are, suffer in *October* from some over-emphasis. Eisenstein cannot leave well alone. After several alternations of the figure of Kerensky and the statue of Napoleon, followed by the title "Two Bonapartes", one feels that the satirist has more than made his point. The narrative passages suffer in the same way: the audience sits up at the first almost audible blast from the whistle of a train advancing with its load of ferocious Cossacks, but sinks back limply at its countless repetitions. So that the spectator may be impressed with the might of Bolshevik activity, he has to watch the unloading of endless bundles and leaflets; he sees officials trooping in and out of an incessantly swinging door; sometimes he is shuttled abruptly from one scene to another with only the taciturn guidance of a few titles. Some of the confusion probably arises from a certain haste in assembly,

and the tangle of conferences, speeches and resolutions is certainly likely to muddle a modern audience unacquainted with the events. But Eisenstein's story as a whole does not lack clarity and the big events—Lenin's appearance at the Finland Station, the storming of the Winter Palace, the flight of Kerensky (in a car flying the American flag)—are handled with superb assurance.

Eisenstein's sometimes heavy-handed and laboured humour, more successfully used in *The General Line*, has its effective moments in *October*. The scared Mensheviks goggle at the machine guns which file past their doors; the silly little idols blankly stare at each other; Kerensky ascends with military formality and metronomic precision the interminable stairs of the Palace in a sequence which has something of the satirical edge of a René Clair.

The visual grandeur and dramatic power of *October* are undeniable. In such passages as the attack on the Winter Palace Tisse's dark and angular compositions, with the figures scurrying past the looming facades, the smoke, searchlights and watching faces, convey the movement, the tension, and even the clamour, of the scene. Eisenstein's own chief interests were composition and montage, and his camera for the most part remains rooted to the ground; when it does go for a brief ride in Kerensky's car, the bonnet of the engine in the foreground is the immobile main element of the shot's composition. Yet within the frame there is much telling and skilfully composed action, notably of course in the crowd scenes.

*October* is an epic of revolt combined with a polemic against ambition (Kerensky) and compromise (the moderates who opposed Lenin's party). Except, no doubt, in the eyes of the converted, the latter element gives rise to most of the film's weaknesses: an excess of visual puns and heavy-handed satire. Yet the special pleading of its message and the naïveté of much of its symbolism, defects though they are, cannot detract from the stature of the film: it remains one of the greatest and most original ever made, and is a theorist's masterpiece.

CREDITS

*Production:* Sovkino, Moscow. *Direction and Scenario:* Sergei Eisenstein, Gregori Alexandrov. *Photography:* Edward Tisse. *Design:* Kovrigin. *Music:* Edmund Meisel. *With:* Nikandrov (*Lenin*), N. Popov (*Kerensky*), Boris Livanov (*A Cabinet Minister*).

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(GRIFFITH, *continued from page* 86)

frustrated. Six indifferent films followed and then his first talkie *Abraham Lincoln* which gratifyingly earned him the vote as Hollywood's best director of 1930. But his next film was never shown, no one would take any notice of him and he languished in unhappy retirement for seventeen years and died in 1948. The debt to him of the silent film is incalculable.

The influence of his two great films brought him a tribute which he rejected. All the early Soviet film directors acknowledge the influence of *Intolerance*, the only film of his available to them in the early years of the Bolshevik Revolution. When *The Birth of a Nation* reached the Soviet Union in 1923, Lenin sent him a personal invitation to undertake the supervision of the nationalised Russian film industry. It is interesting to speculate on his possibilities had he accepted that extraordinary offer.

# NEW BOOKS

## CHAPLIN

**CHARLIE CHAPLIN, by Theodore Huff. (Henry Schuman, New York, $4.50 (36s.) 344 pp. 148 illustrations).**

**THE LITTLE FELLOW, by Peter Cotes and Thelma Niklaus. (Paul Elek, London, 15/–. 160 pp. 38 illustrations).**

THE PUBLICATION OF Mr. Theodore Huff's monumental work on Chaplin has been eagerly awaited. No one interested in the subject can have failed to be struck by the extraordinary amount of misleading information and admitted ignorance which characterise all critical references to Chaplin's early films, prior to the publication by the British Film Institute of Mr. Huff's "Index to the Films of Charles Chaplin" in 1945.

On this stable foundation of facts Mr. Huff has erected an impressive edifice. Every stage of Chaplin's career is traced in some detail, no major film is left undescribed, and a great number of them are illustrated with stills. There are also a large number of miscellaneous illustrations. The original "Index" is repeated in an enlarged form, and 81 short biographies of "people professionally associated with Chaplin" added.

About such a work it may well be said, "What more could one want?" Nothing, certainly; but would one, perhaps, have been more grateful for something less? Might not the "private life" part of the story have been handled either more briefly or less breezily?

No one, presumably, wants biography to return to the pre-Strachey epoch of flattery and moralisation. No one any longer wishes to hear that X succeeded because he got up so early, Y because he never drank anything stronger than lemonade, and Z because he kept hundreds of neat little notebooks. We are naturally more at home with X's, Y's and Z's who succeed in spite of mixing breakfast with lunch, lime with gin, and scientific notes with ribald nonsense. But are we not in danger of overlooking the fact that soot is thicker than whitewash in obscuring the finer details of outline? The present writer, who some years ago was the recipient of a signal piece of kindness from Chaplin, finds in neither of these books a sufficient tribute to his quite remarkable bursts of generosity to humbly placed admirers.

More broadly, is not the Muse of Biography at the present time in danger of taking the wrong turning, and following her erring sister down the primrose path of Journalism?

It is easy to see that there is something of a dilemma involved. It may be said that you cannot explain *Monsieur Verdoux* without making reference to the fact that it is the work of an embittered man; and that this leads to the attacks made on Chaplin from various quarters, and that, in all fairness to the attackers, it becomes necessary to state their case. But such a line of argument assumes that the public has a "right to know" everything, and that, where curiosity and good manners confront one another, it is natural to expect that good manners should be ruthlessly pushed aside.

An alternative assumption would perhaps be that such cases involve a conflict between scientific enquiry and good manners. If this were indeed the case, the choice would be a hard one. But the fact that both the volumes under review are clearly intended for the general reader somewhat weakens this argument. If we must have analyses of the characters of great men, let us at least examine them in the sort of moral vacuum which modern psychology creates. Freud's monograph on Leonardo da Vinci might be taken as a prototype of such work.

But perhaps these are somewhat Utopian generalisations. Let us in the meanwhile be grateful to those film historians who give us facts, and it must again be stated emphatically that Mr. Huff's book brings us a vast accession of new and reliable material.

It is therefore in no carping spirit that I plead with him to alter "cocaine" to "cockayne" (Page 13) and "Dan Leo" to "Dan Leno" (Page 17) in future editions, and to reconsider carefully his interpretation of an episode in the telephone-instrument scene in *Easy Street*, when Chaplin, caught by the Big Man in the act of telephoning to the police, holds the instrument first to his eye and then to his mouth. Mr. Huff says, "To deceive him Charlie 'plays' the receiver like a musical instrument, and 'looks through' it like an

eye-glass". I have always interpreted the actions as representing an ultra-scrupulous inspection of the instrument to check its condition, followed by an obtrusive attempt to blow away an imaginary speck of dust from its surface.

The English biography of Chaplin is an unambitious but, even so, not entirely reliable piece of compilation, unlucky in appearing at so close a date to the American work, which quite overshadows it.

H. D. WALEY.

## FILMS IN 1950

**THE YEAR'S WORK IN THE FILM, 1950. Edited by Roger Manvell. The British Council, London, 5/–. 95 pp., 36 illustrations.**

THE BRITISH COUNCIL'S second annual survey appears slightly muted by unavoidable delay in publication: some of the articles hover uneasily between the topical and the retrospective. For this reason the most general contributions—notably Edgar Anstey's study of regional life portrayed in British films (in which he pays tribute to *Chance of a Lifetime*) and Thorold Dickinson's considered appraisal of the work of Sir Michael Balcon at Ealing Studios—are the most interesting. Competent surveys include Sinclair Road on documentary, John Maddison on specialised films, and A. T. L. Watkins on censorship; the article (by James Monahan) on British feature films of 1950 is, however, quite extraordinary. There are some useful appendices, including lists of features and documentaries, and the awards won by British films during the year. The illustrations are, on the whole, good, and the scope of the volume comprehensive.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

**THE FILM INDUSTRY IN SIX EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. Film Centre, London, for U.N.E.S.C.O., 19, Avenue Kleber, Paris. 156 pp.**

THIS IS A CAPABLY documented survey, carried out by Arthur Elton and Peter Brinson of Film Centre, for U.N.E.S.C.O. The emphasis is on film production in Denmark where, the writers point out, "about 10 features a year are successfully produced at comparatively low cost, for a language group of four millions". Production methods in Sweden, Norway, Italy, France and Britain are studied fully, but in the shade of comparison. The advantages of film production in Denmark spring from the general integration of Danish government and Danish industry, which "has created a tradition of great social importance. Since industry has often received assistance, direct or indirect, from the public purse, it is tacitly regarded as having public obligations". The Danish government, through Dansk Kulturfilm, is an enlightened sponsor and patron of the cinema: it operates by levying a special tax on cinemas for the Film Fund, by remitting part of entertainments tax on Danish films, and by the distribution of special awards.

The book contains a great deal of statistical information on European film production, admirably tabled and presented, and is a compact work of reference. The authors' enthusiasm for the Danish cinema leads them into some overpraise of its product—notably *The Tinder Box* and the Henning-Jensen films.

# THE SOUND TRACK

IN MUSIC FOR THE SCREEN, the carefully planned effect is not always the most successful from the point of view of the audience. Four new records issued recently seem to illustrate this; only the fourth, casual and even undistinguished in comparison with the others, really achieves its intended effect.

A well known lyric writer (Harry Purcell), and a good French composer (Jean Bernard) produced two songs for Yvonne de Carlo to sing in *Hotel Sahara*. Both "I Love a Man" and "Say Goodbye" (Columbia DB.2850) were competent melodies with the conventional ingredients for success; nobody even noticed them.

Mischa Spoliansky and the lyric writer Fishman wrote "Would You?" and "One, Two, Three Waltz Mad" for *Happy-go-Lovely* (H.M.V. B 10116); Vera-Ellen danced and sang in a successful musical, the music itself remained efficient but unobserved.

*The Galloping Major* was celebrated by a musical flashback to the old Leigh-Bastow tune, and Flanagan and Allen made a souvenir record (Columbia DB 2857) to commemorate the event. It is a good ballad but it has failed to register as a popular revival hit-tune.

*La Ronde* has so far received far less widespread public showing than these three films. Its theme tune is slight, lacking the polish of "The Galloping Major", the smooth orchestration of "Would You?" or the planned appeal of "I Love a Man". The Strauss tune is used almost casually in the film; Max Ophuls himself wrote the lyrics, half-sung and half-spoken by Anton Walbrook. The record (Parlophone R 3423) captures all the atmosphere of the picture; Walbrook gives a précis of his original text and the Vienna Bohemian Orchestra provides the accompaniment. Although English versions ("Love's Roundabout") have been recorded, they are surely doomed to failure, since they show a remarkable ignorance on the part of the record companies of the true qualities of authenticity and feeling that make a modest melody into a best selling hit.

JOHN HUNTLEY.

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(IN THE SCRIPT: "*No Highway*", *continued from page* 60)

71. MAIN CABIN.
MONICA looks out at the ground. They are safe. With the landing, all the night's happenings, the fears, the belief she put in Mr. Honey, seem unreal. And all her talk with him, the degree of her disclosures, make her feel a little foolish. After a long moment, Monica reaches for her make-up.

72. FLIGHT DECK.
Safe, the tension over, anger begins to take the place of worry with Samuelson. He straightens, guns the motors as he starts to taxi.

DISSOLVE TO:

73. GANDER APRON.
As the big plane taxis into place. A motor is cut.

74. MAIN CABIN.
As the ship stops, the passengers unfasten saftey belts, and get ready to get out. MR. HONEY sits quietly. To Monica, by their safe landing, he has lost his size; he has become again just an odd little man. In a moment the door is opened and the passengers start out. Mr. Honey keeps his seat. Monica's eyes meet his as she passes him. She smiles, but there is an almost imperceptible difference in her manner, something that puts an end to the intimacy they had found. And Mr. Honey is quite aware of it.

MONICA: Well, quite a night that was, Mr. Honey. I guess you must have multiplied some place where you should have divided.

She smiles, but there is a dismissal in it. Mr. Honey searches for something to say, but Monica moves on down the aisle without waiting for an answer. No invitation to breakfast together. He stands uncertainly. Another first experience for him, in the inconstancy of tribute, and it hurts a little. MARJORIE, at the door, has watched with a compassion that rides above her own dismissal of the night's uneasiness. But Mr. Honey is quite unaware of her concern. Slowly he starts to put on his coat, and goes out past her. Captain SAMUELSON, with the rest of the crew, comes down the aisle from the flight deck.

75. GANDER FIELD. NIGHT.
MR. HONEY comes out from the plane, past MARJORIE, who watches him compassionately. The other passengers head towards the buildings, but Mr. Honey doesn't want to be with them. The ambulance and fire engines are leaving. He stands uncertainly at the foot of the steps, turns back and stares up at the great tail. SAMUELSON comes out with the crew, and stops as he sees him. His face tightens with his anger at the uncomfortable night Mr. Honey has given him. Marjorie watches.

SAMUELSON: Mr. Honey (strides down the stairs; as Mr. Honey turns). I want you to come with me, please (as Mr. Honey hesitates). I want you too, Miss Corder.

He turns and strides away toward the offices. Mr. Honey hesitates a moment. DOBSON glares at him. Mr Honey starts to follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

*Note: minor changes in dialogue, mostly to make it more naturalistic were made from this script. In shot* 58, *Monica's "Well, I'd better get back and get some repairs made" becomes, "The stars are out. I'll go back to my seat". In shot* 74, *snatches of dialogue—inquiries to Marjorie—are included from passengers as they disembark.*

# CONGRESSES AND COURSES

### International Federation of Film Clubs and Academies

THIS FEDERATION, founded at Venice in 1950 by Vittorio de Sica and René Clair, has met twice this year: at Cambridge in June, and at Venice during the recent Festival. The Federation's main concern is to study the problems of relationship between Government and the art of the cinema, and to advise on matters of state legislation affecting the industry and, particularly, the serious film maker within the industry. The leading members are France, Italy and Great Britain: at Cambridge, René Clair and Alexandre Arnoux, scriptwriter and critic, represented France; Signor Contini, critic and member of the Venice Festival jury, represented Italy; Denis Forman, Roger Manvell (vice-presidents), Thorold Dickinson, Ronald Neame and Paul Rotha attended for England. From Austria, G. W. Pabst came as an observer.

Two of the main subjects under review have been the question of Copyright, and methods of financing production. The Federation aims to stabilise Copyright from two aspects: its duration—and its owners. In Italy, the delegate reported, the writer, director and composer of a film are all copyright owners, and are protected by law against any abuse—such as re-cutting it without their consent, or dubbing it for foreign distribution in an unsatisfactory form. In Britain, the Film Institute is now preparing a memorandum for the Committee on amending Copyright.

The Italian method of financing film production aroused much interest among the British delegates. A Panel, consisting mainly of film-makers and film critics, views each film before it is trade shown and places it in one of three categories. A film placed in the top category receives 18 per cent. remission of entertainments tax; in the second category 10 per cent. remission: in the third category, it receives no remission at all and cannot qualify as "quota". A similarly composed panel also selects the Italian films entered for Festivals, to ensure that the highest possible quality of production shall be represented.

### International Federation of Film Archives

Member Organisations of the International Federation of Film Archives which were represented at this year's Annual Congress in Cambridge came from the following countries:—Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, Uruguay, U.S.A., and Yugoslavia; observers were also sent by Organisations in Austria, Canada, Cuba and the Soviet Union. Film Archives in Czechoslovakia, Persia, Poland and Sweden, who are also members of the Federation, were unfortunately not able to be represented.

The main purpose of the Congress was, as always, to bring together the representatives and officers of film archives in the member countries in order to maintain and develop the warm sense of professional camaraderie which exists between them and so to facilitate the main international work of exchanging films and information which is carried out between the archives themselves. How well the Federation has succeeded in holding its members together is indicated by the fact that it has been in existence since 1938, when it was founded by the Cinematheque Francaise of Paris, the Museum of Modern Art Film Library of New York, the National Film Library of London and the Reichsfilmarchiv of Berlin. Not only did the original organisation survive the war, but it today numbers 17 members and has itself done much to develop the archive movement in countries where no archive previously existed.

On the formal side considerable attention was focused at the Congress on the internal organisation of the Federation, having regard to its growing world importance, and matters of common interest such as the needs of Film Societies, the statutory deposit of films for preservation, cataloguing and relations with other international organisations were actively discussed. The non-political character of the Federation was emphasised by the great variety of the countries represented and the members were particularly glad to welcome, for the second time, an observer from the Soviet Union. It was agreed that the Congress for 1952 should, if possible, be held in Warsaw and that for 1953 in Copenhagen.

### British Film Institute Summer School

The 8th Annual Summer School organised by the British Film Institute at Bangor was attended by sixty students this year, including representatives from Switzerland, Nigeria and Abyssinia. The course was introduced by Denis Forman, Director of the B.F.I., followed by an opening lecture by Stanley Reed, Film Appreciation Officer to the Institute. The lecture on Film Acting was given by Mai Zetterling, whose talk was preceded by a screening of *Frenzy*.

Lotte Reiniger, well-known for her silhouette films, spoke on the Role of the Producer, Wolfgang Wilhelm on that of the scriptwriter and Michael Anderson dealt with the work of the Film Director. The technicians' contribution to film production was dealt with by Douglas Hardy (camerawork), Tom Morahan (art direction), William Alwyn (music composition), Lito Carruthers (editing) and John Huntley (sound recording and editing). The documentary film was discussed by James Beveridge, Pat Latham talked on Films for Children, Stanley Reed dealt with the teaching of film appreciation in schools and Gavin Lambert spoke on the work of the critic. Roger Manvell gave a summary of the construction of the film industry as a whole, while an interesting evening was provided by a three-way discussion between Denis Forman, Gavin Lambert and Paul Dickson (director of *David*) on The Interpretation of Reality.

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(SOME NOTES ON ACTING, *continued from page* 83)

the camera, the camera crew, the electricians, the director sitting in front of the camera. The director is the only witness of the acting during the shooting of a film. He should try to help the actor by being a responsive and friendly, if sole, audience, by expressing admiration or disappointment. There must be an inner contact between director and actor, and trust and respect between them.

The stage and the film actor must know equally how to imitate humanity, must speak with conviction and know how to master his body. This is another thing very important for the actor; how he works with his body and his muscles, to get the utmost from every part of his body. When he acts, even the little toe on his right foot should belong to the character that he is trying to portray. It is vitally important, therefore, for an actor to have some kind of dance training—not necessarily ballet—to know what relaxation really means, what tension means, to heighten his portrayal of character with his body. The stage actor may insist on having certain conditions fulfilled before he can create. The film actor has discovered new ways, in fact new qualities, and a new craftsmanship. His new discoveries are a part of a very new and very young medium.

(*This is substantially the text of a lecture delivered at the British Film Institute's Summer School in August*, 1951, *and adapted for* SIGHT AND SOUND *by Miss Zetterling.*)

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(PERSONAL PLEASURES, *continued from page* 88)

sleepy summer meditations and imaginings, which merge reality and the projected fantasies of desire. *Princess Printemps* is an ironic pastoral with a woman chases man motif, a flirtatious romp in a dilapidated classic setting that suggests a remaining Babylonian set from *Intolerance*. "I'm not always myself, you know", the excited lady constantly proclaims, unnerved by spring and the proximity of the young man. *The Ageing Balletomane* is a nostalgic little episode about a middle-aged man's lost love: as he sits on his porch, the slow, monotonous rhythm of his rocking-chair implies an unceasing contrast with the swift and youthful motions of the dances he remembers.

Depending on a slight yet intricate relationship between images, text and music, and on continuities of feeling—like *Mother's Day*, the film flits through time, alternates irony with pathos, romance with disillusion—*Four in the Afternoon* does not always maintain its tenuous balance; the first two movements, *Game Little Gladys* and *The Gardener's Son* are delicate and attractive, edged with whimsy, the second two veer a little uncertainly towards farce and an over-pressed nostalgia respectively. But, even though less successful than *Loony Tom*, it is the most interesting of the films since *Mother's Day*.

The pleasure of discovery is, in the cinema, always endangered by the difficulties for other people in seeing films of this kind; in this case, fortunately, all these films will be made available, through the British Film Institute, to film societies. Those who like the cinema not always to confine itself to dramatic narrative, but find the alternatives of conventional documentary and "experiment" (Maya Deren, etc.) can be even less attractive, should be rewarded by these films, so gently original, unaffectedly poetic and full of perception.

# RASHO MON

## (In the Woods)

*Rasho Mon*, prize winner at the Venice Festival, is a remarkable Japanese film directed by Achira Curosawa. Its story, set in 12th Century Japan, investigates the nature of truth. Three men discuss the problem; one relates it to the evidence given from different, conflicting viewpoints at a murder trial at which he was a witness. The crime was a brigand's rape of a woman and killing of her husband. The stills show (above) the husband and wife's encounter with the brigand—foreground figure with his back to the camera—and (right) the wife, and the trial scene, at which the brigand remains magnificently defiant. The film is discussed at greater length by Catherine de la Roche on page 90. These stills were photographed off the screen by Robert Hawkins.

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